

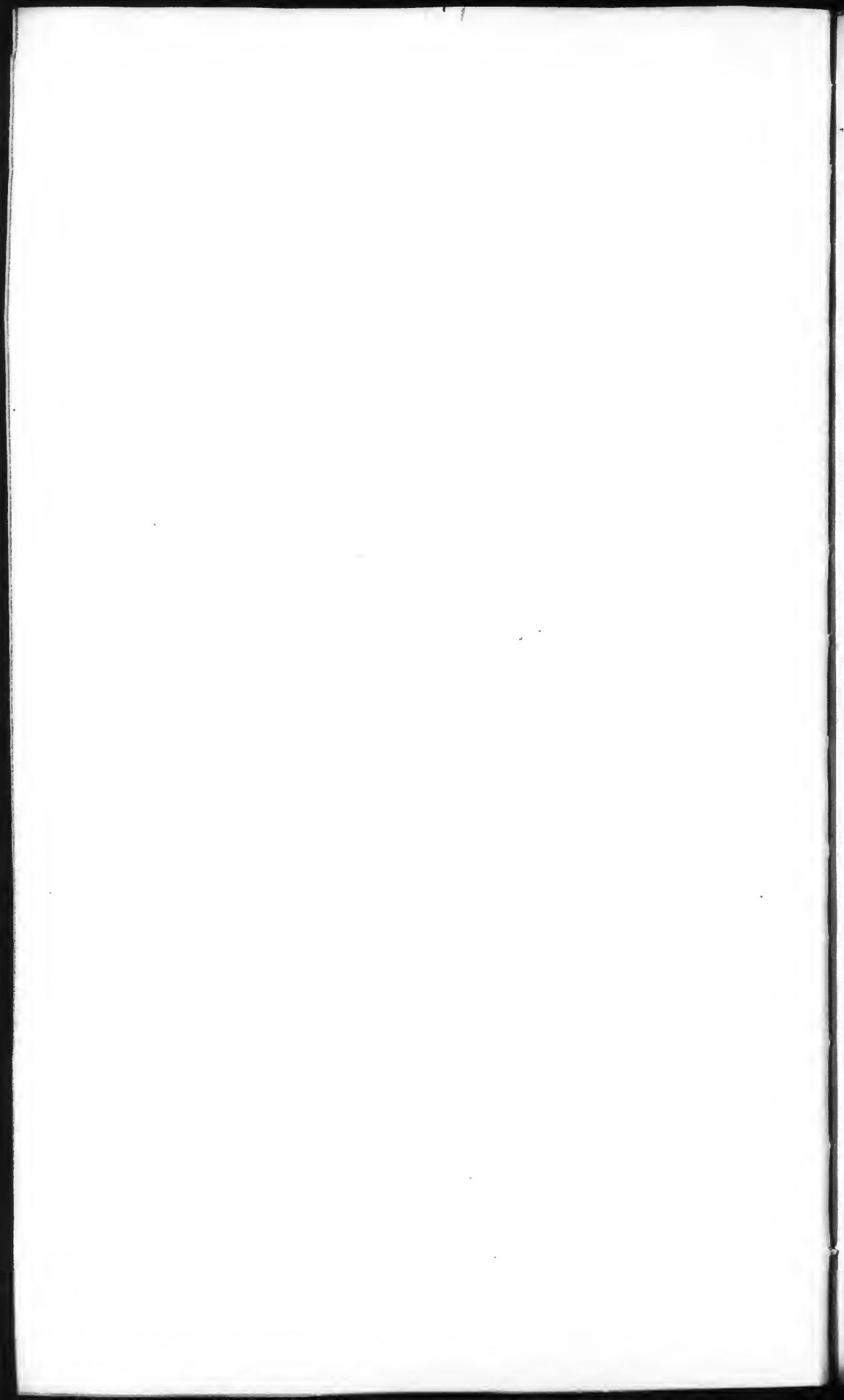
BW286

T₃M₃



Wes. 958





922.7

183

Memoirs
OF THE
LIFE, CHARACTER,
AND
DEATH
OF THE 181
REV. H. TAFT, M. D.

—
BY
DANIEL M^CALLUM, M. D.

..... ILLE HÆC MONUMENTA RELIQUIT.

VIRGIL.

..... EMINENT
IN WISE DEPORT, SPAKE MUCH OF RIGHT AND WRONG,
OF JUSTICE, OF RELIGION, TRUTH AND PEACE,
AND JUDGEMENT FROM ABOVE.

MILTON.

Newcastle :

PRINTED BY EDW. WALKER, PILGRIM-STREET.

SOLD BY J. KERSHAW, 14, CITY ROAD, LONDON ;
R. PEART, BULL-STREET, BIRMINGHAM ;
BAYNES, EDINBURGH ;

&c. &c.

1824.

BW286

T₃M₃

Wes. 958

THE PREFACE.

To so small a publication, a preface may seem altogether an unnecessary precursor. The writer imagines, however, that it is proper for him to hold a short parley with the reader.

As it is probable that this volume will fall into few hands beyond the circle of the late Dr Taft's acquaintance, it is due to them to state, that every endeavour has been used to obtain original documents and letters of the deceased, with a view to do justice to his memory—but with very partial success. The writer, though nearly connected with the subject of this memoir, was put to a great disadvantage by the comparatively slight acquaintance he had personally with his character. He could not boast that he was *fully acquainted* with his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience. The task was then undertaken with as slender a stock of materials, and under circumstances as discouraging as can well be supposed; and if the performance fall short of expectation, the failure must be referred to any thing rather than neglect of opportunity or means to have done it better. Under these circumstances, it may be asked why was it undertaken at all—or if by any one, why not by some one better prepared for the undertaking?

The publication of a memoir was felt to be due to the public worth and private excellence of the deceased; and while it promised to be useful to others, it was a measure peculiarly grateful and soothing to the minds of the bereaved family. By their earnest request the writer undertook the task, which he has now accomplished—with what success is left to others to determine.

On another subject, a remark or two may be allowed. It has been stated by grave authority, that motive does not enter into the consideration to be had of a writer's performance—and that to mean well is no excuse for writing ill. It certainly is not; but as the detection of a corrupt purpose vitiates the character of a very able performance, so the avowal of a pure and beneficial intention may, and certainly does, recommend a very inferior performance. The prevailing motives for submitting to the labour of composition, are the desire of credit or of profit, and perhaps it remains to be proved that either the one or the other is in itself an improper one. Reputation, as certainly as money, may be a mean of usefulness to others, and of support to the individual and his family; and with a view to accomplish the one or the other, he may honorably and uprightly devote the labours of the closet to the instruction of the public.

The author of this slender performance is not sanguine enough to calculate upon either reputation or profit. Biography, like portrait-painting, is a very interesting, but a very humble department of the art to which it belongs. That likeness must have something peculiar in its finishing which interests any beyond the acquaintance of the original. And as the writer abandons the idea of credit, so he relinquishes every intention of profiting by the public sympathy. If, contrary to expectation, any thing should be derived from the sale, beyond what will be necessary to cover the expences of the publication, it shall be faithfully devoted to one or other of the charitable institutions existing among us.

If those are gratified, or in any measure profited, whose gratification and benefit were intended, the writer will not regret having committed himself to all the dangers and uncertainties of the press.

M E M O I R S.

CHAPTER I.

The Parentage of Dr Taft.

THE parents of Dr Taft were persons of genuine piety. His father (after whom he was named Henry) was born at Sandyacre, in the county of Derby, and was a farmer and grazier, occupying a small property of his own. For a number of years he lived according to the course of this world, a stranger to all that is of most importance to be known. The circumstances under which he was brought to God ought to be recorded. After having been for some years married to his wife, Miss Ann Hickingbottom, of Castle Donnington, Leicestershire, God gave them a son and a daughter. It is much to be feared that at that time they had not learnt to trace their mercies to their God, and it is certain they had forgotten God their maker, and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation. From the event of the providence, it may confidently be presumed, that to awaken them to a sense of their condition as the heirs both of sin and death, they were bereaved of

both their children. A few days only elapsed between the removal of the one and the other,—they were interred in one grave, and the now childless parents reared a monument in the church yard to commemorate their grief and loss. To do so, was their only resource in the day of calamity—they knew nothing of the consolations of the gospel; and now having neither son nor daughter, they mourned as those who have no hope.

In much distress and anguish of mind they went on this occasion to visit Mrs Taft's father. It so happened, that while they were on this visit, a near relative of theirs, lately converted to God, invited them to his house to spend the afternoon with him, and took that opportunity of introducing them to the venerable John Nelson, of imperishable memory. Of his character they knew nothing; but the good man having been informed of the trying providence with which they had been recently exercised, embraced the opportunity to addresss them with much wisdom and tenderness, on the supreme importance of spiritual and eternal things. His words produced an impression that words had never made before—their entrance (and they found access,) gave at least a measure of light. Under Mr Nelson's prayer, Mr Taft was much affected—to be prayed for by name, to have his case laid before the Lord,

was a kindness so new and so unexpected, that he could hardly have been more surprised if his name and surname had been pointed out to him, in the salutations of Paul written with his own hand.

When he rose from his knees, he thought he could do no less than ask Mr Nelson to visit him when he should have occasion to be in his neighbourhood. On a moment's reflection, however, he felt some misgivings for having gone thus far, for he knew the reputation of methodism was any thing but honorable in the world's eye. There was, however, now no retreating from his proffer,—the word had gone out of his mouth. Mr Nelson deeply felt the value of souls, and whether or not he perceived the cloud of doubts and fears which gathered in Mr Taft's face, at the thought of entertaining a methodist preacher, certain it is, he soon thereafter paid him a visit, and was kindly received. He conversed and prayed with him, and by the divine blessing on his labour of love, Mr T. was truly awakened, not to sleep again. The object of his visit was now in a great measure accomplished, and Mr Nelson prepared to depart. As he was about to go, Mr T. consulted him as to the propriety of his keeping greyhounds, and killing hares. The good man asked him if he was qualified? Mr T. knew he had not a legal qualification, and probably sus-

pecting the propriety of the practice; he that very day destroyed his dogs and bade adieu to the sports of the field.

He soon found peace with God, and went on his way rejoicing. In those days the word was very precious, and Mr T. like many others, thought it a little matter to walk five or six miles to hear a sermon, or to meet in class. For his neighbours' and kinsmen's sake, "who had not yet the Saviour known"—he became greatly desirous to have preaching in his own village. This object was accomplished, and he esteemed it his honor to entertain the messengers of salvation, whom he prevailed upon not only to visit Sandyacre, but the villages round about. He himself also formed one or more classes, and from time to time he gave a word of exhortation, and was useful to all, as he had opportunity. Before the change of his views took place, Mr T. had been on intimate terms with the clergyman of the parish, but when this gentleman found that Mr T. had introduced the methodist preachers to the village, he was deeply offended; and in the heat of his displeasure, preached several railing sermons, in which he designated these newly arrived preachers as wolves in sheep's clothing, &c. Mr T. waited upon him and reasoned the case with him, and being well versed in the articles and homilies of the church, was able to make

good his cause, that there was nothing in the sermons preached under his roof that was not in accordance with these authorities. He begged him to come and hear for himself. With much candour the clergyman agreed to do so, and said he would sit in Mr T.'s parlour and over-hear the sermon delivered in the kitchen, without being seen by any of the congregation. After preaching, and the dispersion of the audience, Mr T. introduced him to the preacher, and much conversation ensued ; what he heard reached his heart, and from that hour forward, he never spoke a word to the prejudice of preacher or people. On the contrary he continued to cultivate an intimacy with Mr T. and believing him to be a pious man, he not unfrequently read his sermons before delivery, to him, and begged his remarks and suggestions. In a word he seemed honestly desirous that his should be words sought out and acceptable. He even went so far, as to offer the pulpit in any one of four churches, of all of which he was incumbent, for the use of any ordained methodist preacher, and Mr Vasey, Dr Ford, and others, actually were in consequence privileged with opportunities of preaching in one or other of these churches.

Mr T. entered into correspondence with Mr Wesley, and that venerable man paid several visits to his house and village. On one occa-

sion he preached in a large barn belonging to the family, on another in their orchard under a tree. Many years ago this old disciple was taken home.*

* Although it is not, strictly speaking, a part of his history, the following circumstance, in which he had a share, is too interesting to allow an opportunity of recording it to be lost. Ilkeston is a village a few miles distant from Sandiacre. For many years, there was only one methodist in the place, and though the preachers visited it from time to time, no good seemed to result. At length the old woman sickened and died, and the despisers in the hamlet prophesied that all the methodism of the place would be interred in her grave. Mr Crook was then in the neighbourhood, and he thought it his duty to improve the event by preaching in the village on the occasion. Accompanied by Mr T. and another brother, he accordingly went; and Mr T. having obtained the permission of the landlord of the inn, at which they put up, for Mr C. to use his leaping-on stone for a pulpit, the news spread that a funeral sermon was to be preached. All that could attend were present, and among others, the clergyman of the parish. Mr C. had great liberty of speech, and clenched every nail he attempted to fasten, with quotations from the prayer-book, the articles, &c. At the close of the sermon, Mr C. received a message from the vicar to wait upon him next morning, at 8 o'clock; accordingly he went, expecting that it was for controversy he was sent. He was met by that gentleman with open arms, in the entrance of his house. Sir, said he, I heard you last night with pleasure; in what college were you educated? I never attended a college, was the reply. Sir, rejoined the clergyman, I have heard many of the heads of our universities preach, but never heard an equally able defence of our establishment. You are welcome to my pulpit next Sun-

Mrs Taft largely partook in the grief of her husband, on occasion of their loss ; she was his companion in their journey to Donnington, and was convinced of sin, and brought, about the same time, and under the same instrumentality with her husband, to experience the saving power of grace. She was of the family of Fearful, in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and like the first of her race, she wrought out her salvation with much fear and trembling, and with abundantly less joy than falls to the lot of many. She died in peace, and possessed of a good hope through grace. A brief memoir of her occurs in the Methodist Magazine for November, in the year 1806.

A remarkable circumstance occurred on occasion of the last mentioned visit of Mr Wesley

day. Mr C. replied, that he was not ordained, and therefore, to preach in the church would put the other to trouble, without doing any good. But he proposed that he should stand at the church door and preach to the congregation at the end of the service. The vicar published from the pulpit that a stranger was to address them, and numbers lent a willing ear to our preacher, as he dwelt on the solemn words, "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be damned." Under that sermon the clergyman was deeply convinced of sin, and next Sunday told his congregation he had been living without God in the world, but was now an earnest seeker of salvation. By his invitation, Mr Wesley visited the place and preached in the church, and from that time forward, methodism prospered in Ilkeston.

to the family, which it were a pity should be lost. This visit took place at the distance of twelve or fourteen years from the period of her conversion to God, and during that interval a kind providence had given her three sons, other, for those who had, as already mentioned, been taken to the kingdom of little children. Entertaining a respect for Mr Wesley that amounted to veneration, she brought her children to him as soon as service was concluded and he was left alone, and craved his blessing upon them. This venerable man laid his hand upon the head of each, and exclaimed, "the Lord bless the lads," and instantly broke forth into prayer, that if He saw it good He would spare them, to be useful members of society—if it pleased Him, to make them ministers of his most holy word—but if this might not be the case, that God would *in his mercy speedily* remove them to a better world. In effect, his prayer was, that they might live to be holy, or die to be happy. Soon thereafter, the youngest brother was taken away by death, and in the course of divine providence the two other brothers, Henry and Zacharias, became preachers of the gospel. In allusion to this circumstance the Dr was accustomed pleasantly to observe, that he was himself ordained by imposition of hands; and that he had received ordination by the ministry of no less a character than the founder of methodism himself.

CHAPTER II.

Dr Henry Taft was born at Sandyacre, April 16th, 1772, and received an education in the elementary principles of knowledge at some school in the place or neighbourhood. In his twelfth year he was sent to a boarding school in Derby, and upon that occasion young Henry had the honour to be taken thither by Mr Wesley, in his carriage. It was the day following that on which the interesting circumstance mentioned at the close of the last chapter, took place. The Doctor well remembered the little circumstances of the journey, and what presented itself, of the habits and manners of the venerable man. He was at that time in his 78th year, but was still full of activity. They passed no village without its engaging his notice, and his enquiring its name. For the greater part of the time he was employed in reading—occasionally for short intervals he slept—and appeared able to read with fixity of attention, undisturbed by the motion of the vehicle, and equally so, to lapse into a sound slumber of a few minutes continuance. This circumstance may perhaps furnish a conjecture of the physical means, whereby that

extraordinary man was enabled to undergo the vast mental and bodily fatigues he sustained.

Upon a comparison of dates, it appears more than probable, that he was removed from school and apprenticed to a surgeon, about the year 1784. His master was Mr Floyde, of Leeds, a person, from whose letters it may be inferred, that he professed, and probably enjoyed, true religion. From the same authority, it is apparent that Henry enjoyed the good opinion of Mr Floyde, and the two following letters are too honorable to the subject of them, to be omitted. They were written after the period of his apprenticeship had expired.

Leeds, June 17th, 1789.

DEAR HENRY,—For the love I bear that dear good man your father, as well as for your own sake, I shall always be very glad to hear of your welfare and success in your temporal as well as your spiritual concerns. I thank you for the care you have taken relative to Dr Jackson (to whom be pleased to present our most respectful compliments, and tell him we shall be glad to see him at Leeds) and if you can get me the book you mention, and the fossils, but especially the book of plants, I shall owe you much for your industry, and this I think you will now effect. As to your going to London, I would have you watch the openings of Providence. Your age is such, that you need not be in a hurry. Only be sure you ask counsel of God, and he will direct you. I shall always be glad to hear from you. Write to me freely and without reserve. Fear God, and you need not fear any thing else. All my family join me in love to your father and mother; and be assured

I am your's, &c.

J. FLOYDE.

To this letter, is appended a certificate of character ; a document which it was in those days necessary for a young professional man to be possessed of, in order to obtain any medical situation. It is written within the envelope of the letter, and is as follows :—

This is to certify whom it may concern, that Henry Taft, the bearer, served his apprenticeship to me with sobriety. He is a youth of a good capacity, and understands dispensing medicines very well. As witness my hand this 17th day of June, 1789.

J. FLOYDE.

N. B. I believe his honesty may be depended upon.

The letter breathes an amiable and kindly spirit, and the certificate is an honorable one ; and though it might have been written in terms somewhat more flattering, and in respect of the N. B., in terms somewhat less equivocal, the following letter will go far to shew, that Mr Floyde's opinion of his pupil was a very generous one indeed. It is addressed to Mr Taft, senior :—

Leeds, November 15, 1790.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I have often wished to write to you, and to enquire after the welfare of your dear family, but I could not do it, and even now I know not what to say, [probably on the subject that was nearest his heart—some domestic bereavement.] My morning sun is gone down at noon. My very great losses you have heard of. But what I have felt, and must still continue to feel, none know but myself and my God only.

Oh! how happy have I been till now. What a bubble is all created good! Lord stay my mind in future on thee [thyself] alone. Pray where is Henry, and how does he do? If he is at home, or not in a situation, I wish you would let him come down to me for some time. I will pay the expence of his journey, and give him a guinea a week while he is with me. I very much want his assistance to help me with my books, and have no time to do them myself, nor can I get any one that can help me so well as he can. If he can come, therefore, it will do the greatest piece of service you could confer upon your truly affectionate and afflicted brother,

J. FLOYDE.

P. S. If a guinea a week is not sufficient, he shall have more, and I hope to be of use to him too.

The reader will in this correspondence discern two things—first, that the writer was probably an aged, and certainly was an afflicted man—secondly, that he put a very great value upon the services of his late pupil. The pecuniary remuneration he proffers, is more than an assistant ordinarily receives at this day, from the surgeon who employs him, and at the distance of 35 years ago, must have been esteemed a very liberal compensation indeed. The business in which he was to be employed, proves, moreover, the high sense his friend entertained of his integrity.

But it cannot in candor or in truth be concealed, that how high soever the opinion his friend entertained of him might be, yet, in fact, in some respects he did not at that time deserve

it. He was honorable in his dealing, and far, very far above the meanness of falsehood or dishonesty—he was intelligent in matters of business, and attentive to duty; but he had outlived his convictions, if he had ever felt any, and had forgotten the holy commandment in which he had been taught. The situation of a surgeon's apprentice is in nearly every instance very unfavourable for the cultivation of religious principles. He is laid under the necessity to be engaged in the preparation of medicines on the Sabbath-day. He cannot attend a place of worship either frequently or regularly. And if the secular employment of the day of God, although lawful in the particular instance, be dangerous for a man whose religious habits are formed, and whose religious principles are fixed, the danger must be tenfold in the case of a young person but just escaped from school. Then again, the youth in most instances, is removed from his father's house and neighbourhood, is introduced to new associates and new employments, and hardly any thing short of miracle can save him from suffering injury in matters of religion, if not of morality.

Between June, 1789, and March, 1790, he was a student in London. In the first letter given above, allusion is made to his going thither, and in the following March, as we shall see, he left England for Sweden. What was his course of

study in that interval I have no means of ascertaining. He attended Guy's Hospital, and there remain notes taken from the lectures of Dr Wm Saunders, on the theory and practice of medicine. He was a pupil of Henry Cline, Esq. of St Thomas's Hospital, and committed to writing a very respectable synopsis of his surgical lectures—two manuscripts, which sufficiently prove his industry and intelligence. It would seem in addition to these studies, he must have gone through the whole curriculum required at that time, from a candidate for a surgical diploma. He obtained his early in the spring of the year 1790—it bears date February 4. He was then only 18 years of age, but passed through his examinations with credit and comfort. The society of the metropolis did not bring back our youthful friend to his father's God; on the contrary, there is good reason to believe, that with the substitution of the word pleasure for wine, he imitated the erring steps of Solomon—"I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom." He attached himself in the intervals of study to cards, the theatre, and the conversation of youthful and gay companions. It was not likely that he should have gone thus far, and yet have been preserved from actions unequivocally sinful, and although like every genuine peni-

tent, and every good man, he never in after life desired to speak on the subject, it might be gathered from his words, that at this period of life, he did those things which bear no fruit but shame.

CHAPTER III.

Dr Taft was much too young, and too inexperienced, to attempt entering upon private practice, although thus early in life he was possessed of the legal pre-requisites. With a view to enlarge his knowledge of mankind, and to improve himself in the medical and surgical departments of the profession, he joyfully embraced the opportunity which at that time offered, of entering into the Swedish service. Upon this occasion he wrote a lengthened and interesting journal, from which some ample extracts may be made, with credit to the reputation of the author, and, as I trust, not without considerable gratification to the reader.

“ 1790, March 6th. Having obtained my commission* of his excellency Baron Knoul-

* This instrument (for it can hardly in fairness be called a commission) contains the following terms of agreement, to which the signature and seal of the Baron are appended. The original is in the Swedish tongue, but a translation is annexed. “ Mr *Edward* Taft (sic appellatus) has been engaged by me to serve as surgeon in the Swedish army or hospitals. 1. Is to receive £6 salary per month, and £2 10s. mess-money (about 5s. 8d. per day). 2. His passage to be paid by government. 3. Pay to commence from embarkation. 4. Not to leave the service till discharged. 5. His home-

ken, Swedish ambassador at London, I embarked on board the Dispatch, a Yarmouth snow, commanded by James Napier, and destined for Gottenburg. In the afternoon, a vessel fell foul of the Dispatch, and damaged her railing and starboard quarter so much as to prevent us falling down the river as far as intended the next morning."

" 8th. Weighed anchor, the wind contrary, and brought up at Northfleet, where the captain took in six fine horses and a greyhound for his Swedish majesty. Next day the wind became favourable, and we made near nine knots in an hour." It appears, however, from the journal, that the vessel was altogether in an unsound and insufficient state, and was in consequence lost that very voyage on its homeward passage.

" 13th. Cast anchor about 12 miles from Gottenburg, nor did I get out of bed till to-day—the sickness was so intolerable, that I could not remain up for five minutes. We made land on Friday evening, but the mist was so thick on the Saturday, that the captain thought it best

ward passage to be paid." The service was honourable, and the remuneration very fair, equal I believe, to that of assistant surgeon in the British army, without allowing for the difference of the worth of money in Sweden and England.

to lie to. Landed on the 13th on a rocky and romantic shore,* and walked to Gottenburg.

"Gottenburg has a very beautiful appearance—the canals in the principal streets, with their row of trees on each side, present the images of utility and beauty. Small vessels can approach to the houses of the inhabitants. The town is well situated for trade, and is one of the principal ports of Sweden. It is fortified, and appears to be the key of Sweden, which Gustavus was well aware of, when the Danes marched an army against it in the beginning of the present war with Russia. The Danes were then the allies of the Czar, and this enterprize was a stipulation of the treaty subsisting between the two powers. This army was happily prevented from doing much mischief, by the mediation of Great Britain and Prussia, who would have supported the Swedes by declaring war against Denmark, (being determined to keep up the

* "Few objects are more striking or dreary, than the Swedish coast, when approached in this direction. The bay is full of islands, consisting without exception, of the most naked and sterile rocks I had ever seen. These rocks vary in height from a few feet above the level of the sea, to nearly 300 feet. They are generally long ridges, precipitous on one side, and sloping more gently on the other. Not a single plant, not even a lichen or moss is to be seen upon them, so that they appear utterly unfit to contribute to the support of man."—*Travels in Sweden by Dr T. Thomson.*

balance of power) if that nation had not recalled its army. All which the politic Swedish monarch well knowing, he did every thing he could to prevent the retreat of the Danes, wishing to have the assistance of the English and Prussians, even at the expence of being attacked in an unprepared state by the enemy. The generality of the houses in Gottenburg are built of wood, the most plentiful of material for the purpose. It is by nature and art a strong fortress—is surrounded by a wall well planted with cannon, and is garrisoned with about 2000 or 3000 men. I imagined, however, that it was commanded by a hill on the other side of the water, but whether the eminence be near enough to discharge bombs with effect, is what I cannot say."

Then follows an account of the gaieties of the place, which were not disturbed by any apprehensions of danger, in the event of an unfavourable issue to the campaign, nor even interrupted by the recurrence of the Sabbath day. There, as elsewhere on the continent, they *did* religious *duty* in the forenoon of the day, and claimed the rest for mirth and song. I regret to observe that he complied with the prevailing practice—coolly observing, “we must do at Rome what the people at Rome do. The theatres are open on the Sunday evening, but this is not esteemed by them, nor is it in

fact a violation of the Sabbath, for the day begins at 6 P. M. and ends before the doors are opened."

" Tuesday 15th. Procured our baggage from the custom-house to day, and in the evening attended an opera performed at the play house. The Swedes are very hospitable and obliging to strangers, though some try to turn their kindness to account. Early yesterday morning was awakened by the martial music of the different corps garrisoned here, which we understand is a compliment intended to express a welcome to us as strangers, and for which a pecuniary satisfaction is expected—or in other words, it is a mode they never fail to make use of to beg of strangers."

" Wednesday. Amused ourselves by inspecting the fortifications, which the soldiers are constantly employed in increasing and strengthening, as if they expected an immediate attack. The present governor is the very reverse of his predecessor, of whom I understood that when the Danes sent to demand an immediate surrender, he never exerted himself to render the place tenable—in fact, he only waited their arrival, (and told the inhabitants so,) to evacuate the town. Fortunately for the nation, the king with prodigious dispatch, travelled from his army in Finland, arrived at Dalecarlia, a northern province, famous for

its attachment to the royal cause, and imitating his name-sake, Gustavus Yasa, descended into the mines, and begged a supply of 2000 or 3000 men. The demand was immediately complied with, and leaving them to follow, he pursued his route to Gottenburg in the disguise of a courier. He instantly broke the governor, and made unwearied exertions to fortify the town, but before the Danish army began its attack, the British and Prussian courts had interfered.*”

* I cannot deny myself the gratification of making another quotation from Dr Thomson. “ When the Danes suddenly attacked the Swedes in 1788, under the pretence of assisting their allies the Russians, with whom Gustavus III. was at war, they marched suddenly toward this city. Gustavus III. was at the time in a state of great distress. He had gone to Dalecarlia, to solicit the assistance of the warlike peasants of that country, and having mounted the stone from which Gustavus Vasa had addressed them, harangued them with such effect, that they agreed to march in a body against the Russians [the enemy]. Hearing of the march of the Danes, he hastened with the utmost rapidity to Gottenburg, and animated the inhabitants to defend their city. The Danes had taken possession of the Fort Bohus, and summoned the Gottenburgers to surrender. They were not a little surprised that the King was present in person, and that he meant to defend the place to the last extremity. Fortunately Mr Elliot, the British ambassador at the court of Denmark, prevailed on him to accept the mediation of Britain, Prussia, and Holland, and succeeded in stopping the career of the Danes.”

" Saturday 20th. Bade adieu to our friends with the accustomed salutations of the country. The men kiss each other, a gentleman kisses a lady's hand. Our stay has been short, but we have received many civilities. In the afternoon began our route for Stockholm—the governor having dispatched a messenger to secure horses for us, that no unnecessary delay might take place. Performed the first stage on horse-back, the next and following ones in a paltry open carriage, a conveyance, some of them little superior to wheel-barrows. The horses are of a small breed, but hardy. Travelled about 27 English miles before midnight, and being furnished with as good carriages as the country affords, have no real cause of complaint. A soldier must expect to meet with difficulties, and mine will make me esteem the privileges of old England when I return. There were fourteen or fifteen young surgeons in company, all of them brought from England for the occasion. We excite a good deal of curiosity—the peasants not only assemble in the villages to

There are some slight discrepancies between the two accounts, but where the doctors differ, Dr Taft was more likely to be correct than the other, because he was on the spot so soon after the occurrence took place, in fact not more than two years from the attack of 1788, whereas Dr Thomson was not in Sweden till 1812, twenty-four years thereafter.

gaze at us on our appearance, but follow us into the apartments of the post house, to continue their inspection of our persons. The habitations of the peasants, and their manner of living are exceedingly poor, but ignorant of any thing better, they seem contented and happy. We have brought provisions along with us, for we can obtain very little by the way but milk, eggs, and very wretched rye beer.

" Sunday 21st. Travelled three stages, casting lots for the first and second choice of the vehicles. At the end of the second stage were detained some time by a fire which had broke out just before our arrival. The house and the one next were soon consumed; fortunately there was no wind, and we lent our assistance to extinguish the flames. That business accomplished, we made a subscription for the sufferers, which was so unexpected, and as they thought, so liberal, that I shall never forget the gratitude they displayed. They seemed in pain that they could not make themselves understood by us, our interpreter not having come up, for he travelled so much the slower in consequence of having our baggage to take care of. If the wind had risen the whole village must have been destroyed, for the houses are built entirely of wood. The country improves as we

proceed. Travelled 36 miles, and lay on a bed of straw, and fatigue made it delightful.

“ Monday. Thirty-nine miles through a cultivated country, and at night were well accommodated.

“ Tuesday. Forty-two miles through one entire forest, with openings of a few acres extent about each of the villages comprehended within its limits.

“ Thursday 25th. The master of a country seat was waiting on the road side (Mr Mathesias, at Mariestad, Helfarer); he had travelled through England and Wales, and spoke English fluently. He recommended his countrymen to our care, encouraged us to proceed, and assured us we should be well treated by the government, and his countrymen generally. He introduced us to the family and others in his house, and treated us with the utmost politeness.

“ Saturday. Should have reached Stockholm to-day, but for the Interpreter’s carelessness, who has lost his orders, and we must remain where we are till they are renewed. Saw women ploughing (quite a common practice in this country) without any one to assist—in fact, the busineses of agriculture is as much the employment of women as of men.

“ Sunday 28th. Arrived at the capital, and had occasion that very evening to wait upon

the governor in consequence of being billeted, as we thought, in very mean houses. His excellency was at the theatre, and we had to wait his return. We then remonstrated in very respectful terms, but maintained that unless we were to be treated as of the rank of captain, being that which belongs to surgeons in the English army, we must avail ourselves of a clause entered into our commissions by Baron Knoulken, and return to England at our own expence ; adding, that we should submit to any hardship in the service, in common with others, but in the city of Stockholm we could not submit to the lodgings assigned to us. His excellency treated us politely, promised to attend to our complaints the ensuing day, and actually did so to our entire satisfaction. The king sailed yesterday for Finland to head the army, but was driven back by contrary winds, and has this morning proceeded by land.

“ Tuesday, 30th. We have waited first on the secretary of state, then on the admiral, then on the general, who sent us to the War-office, where we were instructed to wait again till 11 A. M. to-morrow, when the surgeon-general should be present.

“ April 1. At the War-office, a gentleman there, thinking some of our demands unreasonable, and ignorant in a great measure of the English language, (for I believe he intended no

insult, but wished to maintain that Mr H— was in error) called one of our party *a liar*. Mr — took huge offence, and resolved to quit the kingdom and the service. I rather suspect the occasion was a mere pretence, and that in reality he was afraid of the smell of gunpowder, and alarmed with the report of active preparations to meet an enemy, whom it is very uncertain if they can meet with success to themselves. At all events, this consideration greatly strengthened Mr —'s resolute determinations.

“ Tuesday, 5th. At length by the mediation of our ambassador, our business was settled, and they of the War-office agreed to pay our expences to Stockholm and our stipulated pay, which at first they had scrupled to do.

“ Monday, 11th. Received orders to set out without delay for the army in Finland. The transportation of troops, ammunition, and naval and military stores, caused such a scarcity of horses, that we were supplied with only half the number with which we had been furnished on our route to Stockholm. It was late in the day when we set out.

“ Many of the houses in the capital are built of brick and stuccoed. The public edifices are superb. In the House of Lords are all the coats of arms of the nobility, which are, any of them, removed on the extinction of the family to which it belongs. The city is about 40

English miles from the Baltic. The approach up the river is by an entrance so strait that a fleet could not be brought to act. This contributes to its safety, and the being built on several islands, to its commercial convenience. Manufactures, arts, and sciences are, I imagine, half a century behind those of England ; and yet the country which produced Linnæus, may boast of contributing to the advancement of science. The reigning prince is a patron of learning, and is said himself to be a good poet.

“ Tuesday. Must in justice to the Swedes observe, that in general they are strictly honest, of which I have had frequent proofs since my arrival. To-day I carelessly left my great coat at the inn (if it may be so called.) A boy was without delay dispatched after me with it, and I found nothing had been disturbed in the pockets.

“ Wednesday, 14th. Proceeded $4\frac{1}{2}$ Swedish miles to Grisleham post-house. The country since we left Stockholm is open, but though cleared of wood is thinly inhabited. This station is on the shore of the Gulph of Bothnia ; passed an arm of the Gulph $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad, and spent the evening in shooting, and got several wild fowl.

“ Friday, 16th. At five A. M. were roused from our straw-bed by the farmer sailors, who came to tell us the wind was now fair, and we

must immediately go on board. These sailors are in fact the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who are obliged (as a kind of tax or vassalage) to be in readiness to forward by boat any persons on the king's service. So many wait for three days, and then are relieved by others ; if the winds are contrary, they must be on the look out. Our boat had a mast and sails, and was navigated by seven men. Our passage to Aland was seven Swedish or 42 English miles. This island has several thousand inhabitants, and contains as much arable land as any part of its size in Sweden. The sea between the main and this isle is called Aland's-häaf.”* The rest of their route presents nothing of importance. They found every where the greatest courtesey and kindness from the parish clergy, and generally lodged on their journey under their roofs.

“ Saturday, 24th. Arrived at Abo, the capital of Finland, after a journey to-day of rather more than seven Swedish miles (42 English.) In our route saw the remains of a wretch hung on a gibbet ; his head was elevated on one pole and his body on another.

“ Abo is not so large as Gottenburg. It has an university, with professors of physic, anatomy, botany, chemistry, philosophy, and

* Precisely the name given in Shetland to the deep sea.

natural history : their salaries are paid by government. By the help of an introductory letter, which one of our party had, we were admitted into the college library. Among the manuscripts, saw the original of a pope's bull, and what was more interesting, several Japan charts drawn on the bark of trees. The collection of coins ancient and modern, is a promising one, but is yet in its infancy. I was grieved to see a bust of Linnaeus thrown behind the door—the greatest man perhaps which that country ever produced.

"There is but one church in Abo, a very large one, in which there are four services every Sabbath, two of them conducted in Swedish, and two in the Finnish tongue, for the convenience of the mixed public."

After another week's travelling, we find the party at Helsingfor, waiting an interview with Dr [titled professor] Asselius, surgeon-general to the army. This gentleman politely allowed them to choose their station, whether on board of the gallies, or in the hospitals. Dr Taft chose the latter, and was accordingly instructed to proceed to Louisa, the seat of the war. Helsingfor, with its fortress of Swarsburg, is another Gibraltar. The king's gallies were here, and he in person, was in the neighbourhood, waiting to take the command of them.

"On the 8th left this place, and met on the

9th, a company of Russian prisoners of war, who had fallen into the hands of the Swedes in a skirmish between the advanced parties of the two frontier garrisons. They arrived on the 10th at Louisa. The route that day from Borgo [the intermediate stage between Helsingfor and Louisa] was along the ridge of a very high mountainous tract, from whose summit the prospect of woods was unbounded. It seemed like gazing from the clouds on an interminable forest."

The care of the wards assigned to him in the hospital, henceforward engaged and occupied his attention, and it would seem the improved system of ventilation and general treatment, was followed by pleasing and satisfactory results.

" May 20th. News arrived that his majesty had captured forty small sail, and that his fleet were blocking up the Russian Revel fleet, if possible, to prevent its junction with the Cronstadt one. Am sorry to hear that two of our frigates were driven by the stress of weather into the enemy's harbour." Dr Asselius was so gratified with the ability displayed by Mr Bolton, [Doctor Taft's companion] and himself, that he entirely surrendered the care of the whole hospital to them. The report of the proceedings of the infirmary, can hardly be gratifying to readers in general : we therefore pass

them over. Bolton and he on one occasion, ventured to Aberfors, the border of Swedish Finland, where the outposts of the two armies were entrenched, and after much fatigue, and some personal risque, returned to Louisa.

“ Friday, 11th. A courier informs us that his majesty has landed his army within eight Swedish miles of Petersburgh ; we hear by the same person that a junction of the Russian fleets has taken place, and a brisk action has been fought by them and Prince Carl. A third courier from General Armfelt’s army informs us that 13,000 Russians have attacked his little army of Dalecarlians, only 2,000 strong. Being entrenched, they succeeded in repulsing the enemy, who made three attempts with great resolution. The Swedes, although they have maintained their post, have lost 500 killed and wounded. General Armfelt, and fourteen other officers of distinction, are among the latter.

“ Thursday, 17th. A courier has brought the disagreeable news that the Russian fleet has blockaded ours in Wyborg bay, and thus their retreat is cut off.

“ Sunday, 20th. Attended divine service at the camp—officers and men regularly attend. Each regiment has its chaplain, who reads prayers twice a day, and preaches on Sundays and holidays. The soldiery generally are an

ornament, as well as a defence to the community—they seem to be truly pious and good christians. Every poor person bows to you in passing—they seem as courteous as they are good. They leave their doors unlocked at night, for they know they have nothing to fear."

The country in general is very rocky, great part of it is covered with firs. The kings of Sweden have erected colleges of agriculture, with the hope of improving the soil—and in some parts of the country, the experiments tried, have been attended with success. Gothland, and some of the Baltic provinces produce wheat, which the rest of Sweden does not. The rocky ground is covered with a profusion of wild strawberries.

Vegetation* in Sweden, as in other northern countries, is far quicker than in climates nearer to the Sun. For about two months of the summer, the heat is oppressively great, and in winter, the cold is so great, that but for the use of very thick clothing, the loss of limbs by the frost would be more frequent than it is—as matters are, it is not a rare occurrence. The seas of Sweden are the Baltic, and its two arms the gulphs of Bothnia and Finland—and the Sound, which divides Sweden from Denmark.

* Dr E. Clarke's Travels in Russia.

They have no tides, but a current constantly runs into the German ocean. The mines of iron, copper, and silver, yield a considerable revenue to the government. The fossils produced in Sweden are very numerous. The Swedish horse resembles the Welch breed, and is well adapted for the cold and barren soil. The hare is said to grow grey in winter, and to be constantly of a light colour in the northern parts of the country. The race of bears is dying out, both in Sweden and Finland. The crow is of a grey colour—the sheep exceedingly small. These again remind me of the wolves, which are both numerous and troublesome, and in winter time especially, are not a little daring in their attacks.

Sweden has more navigable rivers than the neighbouring countries, and several lakes, two of which, the Wenner and the Wetter, I have myself seen. The seas, lakes, and rivers abound with fish—the pike [called geddä] is so plentiful as to be dried for exportation. We were supplied with anchovies as good as those from the Mediterranean.

The peasants are a hardy strong race, and under the conduct of good officers, make excellent soldiers, especially the Dalecarlians. They bear fatigues, and encounter difficulties, with amazing resolution.

The nobility are very much irritated at his

majesty's conduct in overturning the constitution, and that is the principal cause of the disastrous progress of the war. As a body, they are distinguished by politeness and hospitality. The higher classes, and especially the clergy, are distinguished by their learning, which reaches to several of the living, and some of the dead languages. They have warm notions of honor, and are very jealous of their interests.

The king has so many enemies at home, that it is more than probable his life may be ended like that of his ancestor Charles the 12th, who, it is generally believed here, was shot by one of his own officers.* If Gustavus had not been one of the ablest men in Europe, he could not have acted on the offensive against such enemies, and with such an army. He has undoubtedly made himself absolute, but it is far better for a people to have one tyrant than an hundred, and he has not hitherto made an improper use of power.

Sweden has two universities, Upsal and Abo, and every diocese has a free school to qualify pupils for the university. The clergy are greatly respected, and the lower classes are very re-

* It is very remarkable that this prince came to an untimely end about two years thereafter. He was assassinated in March, 1792, and was succeeded by his son Gustavus Adolphus, who was dethroned in 1810.—ED.

ligious—the higher ones are much addicted to gambling, and games of chance, such as billiards, cards, and backgammon.*

The dress of the Swedes differs from the English chiefly in wearing jackets instead of coats and gowns—the appearance of which, to my eye, was very ungraceful. The peasants in Finland wear caps instead of hats, and both sexes go barefoot, except on Sundays, and then, these luxuries of shoes and stockings, are only resorted to when they are near the church door. Their amusements are not numerous; of music they are very fond; the violin is the favourite instrument. All classes are addicted to smoking. The Swedish coin now in general use is the rixdollar, worth 3s.; there is one

* A nobleman of great rank having waited longer than usual for his dinner, and seeing that no preparation was made for it, went down to call his servants to an account, and to examine into the reason of the delay. He found his household, in imitation of their superiors, deeply engaged at cards. They excused themselves to their master by telling him that they were now at the most interesting point of the game; and the butler, who had the greatest stake, took the liberty of explaining the case to his excellency, who could not in conscience but approve his reasons. However, being unwilling to wait for his dinner till the game was decided, he sent the butler to lay the cloth, while he himself sat down with the other servants, and managed the interest of that individual in his absence.—*Acerbi's Travels.*

gold coin worth about 9s. 4d. the ducat, but it is not in general use.

3 Runsticks	make one Stiver,
4 Stivers	one Schilling,
48 Schillings	one Rixdollar,
2 Silver Dollars	one Plote,
3 Plotes	one Rixdollar,
1 Gold Ducat	equal to between 2 and 3 Rixdollars, per exchange.

The coins formerly used in Sweden were copper plates stamped with their value, but they are now out of use. It then required a wheelbarrow to receive the value of 20 or 30 pounds. The traveller in Sweden meets with wretched accommodation, and unless he travel in his own carriage, must accept of an open vehicle, and often a very disagreeable article of the kind. Such is the case in summer—in winter matters are changed for the better ; the ground is frozen and sheeted with snow, you are laid at full length, and well covered with furs, on a sledge, which the horses draw along with great rapidity.

By a clergyman I was informed that christianity was introduced into Sweden about nine hundred years since, by two priests from Cornwall, and it is generally believed that the translation of the Scriptures was made by these men—the original copy is still extant.

“ Saturday, July 3rd. About 4 p. m. we

were alarmed by the report of cannon in the direction of the fleets ; broadsides are dealt at an almost incredible rapidity.

“ 4th. We heard the roar of cannon the whole night long, and during the greater part of to-day. We are all anxiety to learn the issue of the engagement ; the object of which, on our part, must have been to force our way out of the bay.

“ 5th. Firing continued all night, and in the evening a courier arrived with the news that the Swedish fleet had fought its way through the Russians, but had suffered considerably, and was obliged to put into Helsingfor for repairs.

“ 6th. A number of wounded brought to the hospital, upon one of whom I performed the operation of the trepan, and extracted 29 pieces of bone from the wound. The Swedes are much dispirited by the loss the fleet has sustained. During the action, Prince Carl was slightly wounded in the arm. The king has put into Swensund, in Russia, with the galley fleet.

“ Friday, 9th. Yesterday the Russian small fleet, assisted by frigates, zebecs, cutters, bomb-ketches, &c. bore down to Swensund to attack the king, and for some time the action seemed in favour of the Russians ; a courier was however dispatched to the neighbouring ports, and the gun-boats and cutters, without delay, bore upon the Russians, who were by this means

placed between two fires. After a battle of twenty hours duration, the Swedes proved victors, taking [according to the courier] between 4000 and 5000 prisoners. The Russians lost five frigates, sunk and taken, several row galleys, boats, &c.

“ In all probability, we shall soon have peace, for I understand both powers have offered terms.

“ Saturday, 10th. Two hundred and fifty prisoners came through Louisa to-day, some scarce fit to carry arms, whom the necessities of the Czarina had obliged her to employ.

“ 11th. A number of wounded, both Swedes and Russians, brought to the hospital. To the honor of this country, both were treated with equal humanity.

“ Six hundred wretched objects of prisoners marched to Louisa, and were allowed to refresh themselves by resting here a few days.

“ I hear that his majesty has made examples of two officers for disloyal practices. He is in more danger from his subjects, than from his open enemies, for it is understood, that his life has been more than once attempted, and though their design has hitherto been frustrated, it is much to be feared this will not always be the case.

“ Monday, 12th. About 1000 prisoners arrived, and were humanely allowed to remain a

few days: and in the afternoon 150 officers, nine of them Englishmen, from whom we received a more particular account of the action, and the present state of Russia, than we had hitherto possessed. They asserted that the Russian force (had it been properly conducted) was sufficient to have taken our whole fleet. It was commanded by the Prince of Nassau, who made the memorable but unsuccessful attack upon Gibraltar, with the combined forces of France and Spain. The Prince, contrary to the advice of his officers, would make the attack as soon as his vessels arrived, although his men were worn out with constant rowing. The attack was made in confusion and haste; and the gun-boats ordered to begin the action had very little powder on board. For an hour and an half they fought with great resolution, but having expended their ammunition, were obliged to retire: then, and not till then, the row gallies bore down to their assistance, and were allowed alone and unsupported to receive the fire of the enemy, till they began to give way. The Prince now ordered the frigates (himself being in one of them, *which kept at a good distance*) zebecs, cutters, and floating batteries to engage. The row gallies made some impression on the left wing of the Swedes, but they seeing the enemy beginning to yield, and perceiving how successfully they had directed their fire, pulled a head,

and renewed the engagement with equal resolution and success. The gallies, although assisted by the whole force above mentioned, and although their captains (many of them Englishmen) reproached, enticed, and threatened by turns, to prevent their retreat, continued to give way. The Swedish gun-boats aimed chiefly at the holds of the enemy's frigates, and every shot told in that direction. Just then the small vessels from neighbouring ports placed the enemy between two fires. Many struck their colours, Prince Carl (Nassau) with others fled; the wind proved contrary, and the frigates and cutters, though hopeless of success, held out a while, and one of them commanded by Marshall, an Englishman, refused to strike, and having wasted his last shot, *went down gallantly with flying colours.**

" 16th. An armistice is signed, to continue till a treaty of peace shall be concluded. To give effect to the terms of Sweden, the army is kept in an effective state, every military preparation for renewed service goes on as rapidly as ever.

" 21st. Obtained my discharge, many having done so before, for now the war in effect is at an end. A courier has arrived from London to offer the mediation of Britain.

* How differently, how very differently would Dr Taft have thought and spoken of such a circumstance in the subsequent periods of his life.

" Sunday, 25th. Embarked in the Grampus, a Scotch sloop, to sail for Stockholm, having bid my friends adieu. The wind being contrary, the captain altered his course and stood for Petersburgh, to take a cargo thence.

" 27th. Entered Cronstadt harbour, but being without a passport, am put under surveillance till I shall be examined at Petersburgh, and am to publish myself twice in the public papers before I can leave the country. My remonstrances were all in vain, was obliged to submit to be constantly attended by a guard."

The Doctor, however, went to Petersburgh, obtained the countenance of the English Consul, procured the passport, published himself in the papers, and was then at liberty. He visited the public buildings of the capital; but his observations have nothing remarkable in them, or at least little that is not pretty generally known. He tells us that the generals of the army, availing themselves of the well-known superstition of the Boors, frequently have contrived to bring them to an engagement on the days of their favourite saints, when the ignorant men imagine that they must prove successful.

The travels of Dr E. Clarke were not published to the world till many years after the date of Dr Taft's tour, and in fact his visit to

that country did not take place till Paul was upon the throne. I feel a gratification in observing, however, that many of his remarks are anticipated in the journal before me. They speak in the same language of the political and religious state of Russia, and of the private character of its inhabitants. I may mention a few of the concordances. Dr Taft specifies instances and proofs of the degradation and superstition of the lower orders; that they are held in a state of melancholy vassalage to their lords, and are many of them attached to the soil; that in respect of religion they are in a darkened and benighted state, and their morals are such and such only as *their* religion might be supposed to produce. Thieving is as common as it could be if it were held to be as innocent as slight of hand, and decency so little cared for, that to quote his own words, “persons of both sexes and of all ages, are to be seen washing together naked; first taking the steam bath in a heated house, and then running in full perspiration into the sea.” Christianity is forcing its way into that mighty empire, and it will carry its train of blessings in its course.

I do not know that it would answer any good purpose to return to the journal; suffice it to say, his return to England by a British vessel was effected with difficulty, for whether from

the severity of the weather, or the insufficiency of the vessel and its captain, certain it is, they had again and again to put into different ports, but at length reached London in safety, October 10th, 1790.

CHAPTER IV.

Every intelligent and pious reader will discern in the contents of the last chapter, ample evidence that the Doctor was, during the period to which it relates, a stranger to God. "The Sunday shone no Sabbath day to him," an unquestionable proof that he remembered him not in heart or life, who hath commanded us to keep it holy, and what is sufficiently remarkable, throughout the whole journal, spreading itself over 145 pages, the name of God never occurs, and one serious reflection never steals on his thought, never flows embodied in words from his pen. The form of godliness often survives the power, in the case of those who have fallen from the truth, and it is equally certain that a person religiously educated, continues not unfrequently to bow the knee, and at least to stand in awe of the Lord's day, long after he has fallen into immoral and wicked practices. It is said by the fellow collegian of a man who filled a distinguished and interesting station in the church of Christ, [his name is purposely suppressed] that at Oxford, when he had so far cast off fear, as to be guilty of drunkenness, he would nevertheless, with his senses disturbed by excess, tremble to lie

on his bed, till he had knelt down and repeated a form of prayer. The subject of this memoir seems not only to have cast off fear, but also to have restrained prayer, and lightly to have esteemed the rock of his salvation; and although in a foreign country, near the seat of war, and occasionally exposed to very great danger by sea and land, he never seems to have had conviction of sin, nor a sense of his danger.

He returned to England towards the close of the year 1790. Before he arrived in England, Mr Floyde, of Leeds, his late master, had died, and of course, the offer he had made him but a little before his decease, (p. 10) could not be accepted. At what time precisely it is not easy to ascertain, but about this period, he went to Ilkestone, a small country town within a few miles from Sandyacre, his father's residence, and his native village, and there began business as a surgeon. What success he met with, I know not; probably it was not great, for he soon removed from thence to Nottingham, and was induced to do so by several considerations. He had become acquainted with Mr Killingley's family of that place, and paid his addresses to Miss Ann K. His advances were favourably received by this amiable and accomplished woman, and the connection certainly promised the parties all the happiness that this world can

give. She was older than him by a few years, but was of a cheerful disposition, and possessed a mind which was well and variously informed. Her connections in life were likely to promote his worldly interests, and her fortune was a very respectable addition to his own.

That she was a woman of talent and of taste, I think is apparent from her letters, written in a style of easy pleasantry, almost as lively as some of Cowper's, and from her album written with her own hand. The following is the only letter of her's which I have in my possession, of those she wrote in her unconverted state. It begins without date, mention of place, or compellation.

" O the blessed effects of living in a cross-country village. Now if you had taken up your residence in Paris, Edinburgh, Dublin, or in any of the neighbouring kingdoms or states, one might have been almost certain of hearing from you, but at the immense distance of six or eight miles, (cross-posts) one hardly can. Now it unfortunately happens that I, (like you) have more than a common share of that troublesome ingredient in my composition, called impatience, and having met with a very unforeseen disappointment this week, it has put me in a very ill humour, and made me anxiously wish for a letter from you to dispel it. I am almost afraid to tell you what it is, for fear you should rejoice in it, but as I cannot keep it from you long, I might as well make a merit of it by informing you speedily—know then that a very naughty letter came this week (just as I was settling my march for London) intimating, that a lady intended us the high honour of a visit. I

was ordered to unpack my clothes and content myself at home, (for the present at least) to receive this good kind friend in due form, and like a dutiful daughter, as you may suppose, instantly complied.* I submitted with a tolerably good grace, remembering that they are the least fit to govern who are most unwilling to *obey*, (what a tremendous word that looks? Dr Ford, of Melton, told me not long since, that there was a talk of the clergy taking it into consideration, and having it entirely erased from the marriage ceremony, and if so, it is good policy to wait the event): but to return, that ugly letter above mentioned, came by a cross post, the which, and the disappointment of not hearing from you, is sufficient to make me dislike them for ever.

Sincerely am I your well wisher,

ANN KILLINGLEY."

I remember a very accomplished female making the remark, that though she hated nonsense, there was something fascinating in the very trifling of a person of talent.

To escape the grief and disappointments incident to cross posts, and to be nearer the object of his affection, the Doctor very willingly removed to Nottingham. He entered into partnership with Mr Maddock, one of the first surgeons in that neighbourhood, father of a large and highly respectable family; one of whom, the Rev. B. Maddock, was the friend and correspondent of Kirk White.

When his marriage took place with Miss Killingley, as they were equally disposed for gaiety

* The journey was to prepare for the marriage.

and expence, they put little check upon their inclinations. A miniature of the Doctor, taken at that period retains all the freshness of its original colouring, and represents him as exceedingly shewy in his dress and appearance ; a circumstance I the rather mention, as in the latter years of his life he was any thing but "fantastic, trim, and neat." He was united to his lady for six or seven years, and till the year 1797, continued a stranger to the power of saving grace. He mingled in all the gaieties of life, rarely went to a Methodist chapel, and seemed of all others least likely to become a preacher of the word. As he kept apart from religious society, the friends of his father's faith kept at a distance from him, and in fact no intercourse took place except on one solitary occasion. The excellent Mr Bardsley had occasion to visit Nottingham on a begging expedition ; among others he called on the Doctor, to whom his presence and his errand were equally unacceptable. There is no resisting the eloquence of love. Mr B. told him he had known him from a child ; that he had visited his father's house, had carried him in his arms, had bathed him in a cistern or a tub of water, and followed up his appeal with the history of the chapel whose cause he was sent to plead. The Doctor was subdued in spite of himself, and subscribed ; a

thing he would hardly at that time have done at the instance of any other.

Here were two young persons with every thing the world envies or loves ; she had an affectionate husband, an agreeable person, the comforts and luxuries of life, and two dear children born within the first three years of their union. He was in an excellent business, daily more and more the master of his profession, far above want, and enjoying all that respectability of station can command. But he was not happy, he had convictions of sin ; his conscience was enlightened, and it was polluted ; he knew among what people the comfort of religion most prevailed, but they were despised, and he thirsted for the honor that cometh from man. Less informed than himself on the subject of true religion, she did not so well know what was wanting to make her happy, but she was unconverted, and there was of course an aching void which nought but God can fill.

If the serious reader think much of what this brief chapter, and the preceding ones, contain, are unimportant as parts of a religious man's character, let him know these are but the shades of the picture. I trust they may serve to set off by contrast the power of grace, and demonstrate its character by the nature of the change which actually took place.

CHAPTER V.

We come now to the most interesting period of the Doctor's life—that in which he was savingly brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I think myself happy on this occasion in having it in my power to present to the reader an account of the matter, written by the subject of it himself. Of the subsequent experience and walk with God, I find no detailed account among his papers, but this is by far too interesting a document to be lost. Though the narrative subjoined begins and terminates with great abruptness, it is only so much the more characteristic of its author, and by those who knew and loved him, will, on that account, be the more esteemed, as bringing him forcibly to their remembrance. It is as follows :—

“ About April, in the year 1797, the Lord graciously inclined my heart to seek him. I had not very painful convictions. I had always sinned against light and knowledge, and although my judgment was all my life informed, I do not know that I ever before had a wish or a desire to seek the salvation of my soul. I have, indeed, at times, had painful fears of fu-

ture punishment darting across my mind, and especially when I was ill, and at those times have frequently wished that I had died in infancy. I believe at some times I have wished for annihilation—and yet my wicked carnal mind was so opposed to God and holiness, that I do not remember ever to have formed one resolution to forsake sin and fly to Christ. I was going to hell with my eyes open, and yet so hardened by the effect of sin, as to be in the general, fearless of danger. I some times heard the gospel, to please my father, for whom I had always a great affection, but though sensible of its important truth, never paid any attention to it. I once [when an apprentice] went to a class meeting from the same motive, but felt very miserable during the time: my carnal mind always avoided the company of religious people, and for many years I had never once bowed my knees in private prayer. I was entirely destitute of the form as well as the power of godliness, although I had received a religious education; nay, I have been so far opposed to any thing that was good, as to ridicule those who were alive to God; not so much however, with a malicious intention towards them, as with a design to amuse my sinful companions. My soul was buried in sensuality; pleasure was my god, in the pursuit of which, I was fearless of all consequences: sacri-

ficing whatever opposed my inclinations, and following after it with constant and increasing avidity ;—I believe no one was ever more completely entangled, or faster shackled by the snares of Satan.”

“ Notwithstanding I was so very far from God, I was not brought by very cutting convictions to a sense of my state as some are, but was merely moved by a fear that in the pursuit of pleasure I should sometime or other injure my reputation in the world, and eventually destroy my soul. I was enabled by divine grace to resolve on forsaking all sin, and seeking for union with God and his church. Having come to a resolution, I instantly attended with diligence the outward means, sought the acquaintance of those who were serious, prayed much in private, forsook all sin, and though I had scarcely any painful conviction, I was always sensibly refreshed and comforted with a sweetness of love in my mind, and much blessed under preaching. I was gradually, and I can scarcely tell when or how enabled to believe in Jesus Christ. My heart seemed drawn like Lydia’s, and gradually opened to receive the Saviour. I now felt an immediate necessity of cutting off all my old acquaintance at once, for I was sensible of my great weakness, and saw clearly that I could not yet profess Christ among his enemies. When I was for-

saking my old associates, I had occasion to transact a little business with one of them, intending this interview should be the last, as he was ignorant of my conversion to God—he put a question to me, I prevaricated in my reply, and felt that I had grieved the spirit of God. Every spark of saving faith was gone, my confidence was no more, and a weight of unbelief instantly oppressed me. I was now very sensibly under condemnation, but had not that painful conviction which some have, for I was not only convinced that I might, but also determined that I would be healed. Satan tempted me not to be so much in earnest, but I gave myself unreservedly to prayer all that afternoon, praying almost without ceasing, wrestling and agonizing in spirit with God. My unbelief seemed to increase, and I made my state known to a few friends. At preaching I seemed to get no good ; in the band meeting several prayed for me, in an instant my unbelief fled, my load fell off, faith, love, peace, and joy, took possession of my heart. I instantly began praying for one in distress, and who had been seeking mercy for about twelve months. The Lord graciously answered my prayer, and delivered her soul.”

“ I now walked in the liberty of the sons of God, I had peace with him. Though I certainly was pardoned, and had the fruits of jus-

tifying faith, peace, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, with power over all outward sin, yet my liberty was not complete. Though I had a degree of purity of intention, it was not without selfish mixture. I determined to renounce the world, mortify the flesh, and resist the Devil, yet was there a something of self in all my actions not fully discovered to me at that time. There was moreover a sinful principle within me, not gratified indeed, but still existing, and even when I wished and prayed for usefulness, I did not sufficiently lose sight of self. I soon saw the revival was of God, and could join in prayer with distressed souls, when few or none but the friends of the work were present, especially in band or class meetings, and in small prayer meetings, but in the large congregation when the work broke out [as it did when Mr Bramwell visited us] and many of the enemies of God stopped from curiosity or worse motives, I felt unable to engage in their presence. I continued to aim at usefulness, partly with a pure intention to the glory of God, and partly with a desire for esteem—frequently under this mixed motive, I ran before I was sent, and took up crosses which I now believe were not at that time designed for me. I continued conscientiously to pray in private several times a day, but for want of faith was seldom sensibly blest and refreshed,

and though I continued to pray in public, it was without usefulness ; for I now see, that on account of my pride, the Lord could not use me with safety to my own soul. I think none have ever had a more wicked heart, one more filled with pride, in-bred sin, unbelief, a desire to please, and be esteemed of the children of God. It seems astonishing to me now, that I should even then have enjoyed the favour of God, and have been so blessed as I was, with love and joy in the witness of the spirit under the preaching of the word. I was generally [indeed at that time, always] more blessed in the public means than in private prayer. The Lord was very gracious to my soul in delivering me from in-dwelling sin, and I never saw so fully into the nature of it, never apprehended the depth of in-bred corruption till the time when the Lord granted me deliverance. For several months I was seeking the blessing of inward purity before I came into the possession of it, and several times was near the attainment thereof before it became my own : on which occasions I was prevented from obtaining it, by ignorance of its nature, spiritual indolence, and by not fully obeying the light of the spirit, and then my soul came into darkness. For some time after in-bred sin was destroyed in my soul, I seemed only to enjoy a negative salvation :—I was delivered from sel-

fishness and all evil, but enjoyed little of the nature of God, the graces of the spirit were in a very weak degree, the witness of the spirit not very clear—mine was sanctification in its most infant state. But blessed be God I now feel a much greater salvation :—all the graces of the spirit are stronger, and especially faith in Jesus Christ. I feel a much greater death to the world and self. Sometimes the Lord has blessed me with such a desire for the salvation of souls, that at those times I could think I would willingly die if by that means their salvation should be promoted. It has generally been at meeting that I have thus felt, and commonly the desire of my heart has been given me—souls have been saved, and then my weight of desire has given place to gratitude and praise.”

“ Oh ! how has my soul been consuming with desire, and earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer for the salvation of others. At such times I have frequently felt a travailing in birth for individuals, when engaged in prayer on their behalf. I have felt the load of their unbelief, and have felt their deliverance, sharing in their sorrow and in their joy, and felt confident of their salvation as soon as they had experienced it, and before they had declared it.”

“ On Tuesday, ten weeks and three days before the death of my dear wife, as I was

riding on horseback into the country [to see my brother, then ill of a fever] without having previously thought of her by the way, it was suddenly and very powerfully impressed on my mind, that God would certainly take her from me, that she should die. I never felt a similar sensation [*impression*] in my life. When I returned home in the evening, I found that my dear Ann had miscarried in my absence. I mentioned this sudden and awful impression to Mr Bramwell, but not to my wife. Though she recovered from the abortion, she was never restored to perfect health. She was seized with an intermittent fever, issuing in typhus, about three weeks before her decease."

" Soon after my conversion, she condescended to attend preaching, and our other means of grace. In the same year she became savingly acquainted with Jesus Christ. A visit which she afterwards paid to some friends at Sheffield, was made a great blessing to her soul, and she was, from that time, in general, fully devoted to God. She was an ornament to her profession, having never from this time, except it were twice, or at most thrice, been overcome of her own spirit, on which occasions, her evidence was obscured, but she rested not till it was restored to her. About three months before her death she obtained sanctification, and never lost it from that hour. I have often surprised her on her

knees reading the New Testament, and it may safely be asserted, few ever lived nearer to God in private than she did. Many a time in the day did she earnestly engage in prayer for herself, for me, for other individuals, and for the church. The work of God was her delight, and she would willingly engage in it with all her heart. She was no formalist—I am certain from her conduct, that she would not have retained the form of religion any longer than she felt the power of it in her soul. Her conversation was truly spiritual, and she would reprove me whenever she thought mine was not sufficiently so. From the period of her conversion, she loved the poor, and was their real friend. She desired to be as frugal as possible, that we might have the more to give away. Her love to others was always in proportion to her opinion of their piety, and no one enjoyed more of her esteem than a poor rag-woman, who was eminent for holiness. Nothing pained her so much as to perceive the souls of her serious friends to be in a languishing state—this used, she informed me, to lay with weight upon her mind, and caused her to mourn before the Lord on their account, and pray for them."

" In the beginning of her last illness, her greatest trial, she would often inform me, was the being prevented from hearing Mr Bramwell; for, said she, this is his last year among

us, and I see little probability of being able to reap much advantage from his ministry. During her whole illness, though repeatedly asked the question, she uniformly said she had no fear of death. It was evident to all, [although she manifested strong affection to me and the children] that after she took to her bed, which was twelve days before her decease, she had no anxious wish to live. She assured me, the worse her body became, the happier her soul was. So far from murmuring on account of the violence of the pain, she declared she would praise God for every pang, and actually did joy in tribulation. When her danger increased, her language was almost always praise —sometimes she would engage in prayer, but in general she was praising the Lord. She exclaimed, "all that is within me praise the Lord," and then invited all who were present, to join her in His praise. She was not assailed by the enemy. A few days before her death, she became delirious, but still her language was the same, it was full of praise. There were intervals of recollection, and in these, for the satisfaction of others, I repeatedly asked her, if she had any fear of death, and her answer was—none at all—my soul is happy. The evening before her death, she said with a smiling countenance, it is pleasant to speak of death."

“ On Thursday morning, Nov. 20, 1800, the day before she died, being then sensible, she called Rosannah Shaw to her bed-side, and told her she had much to say—she desired her to inform me, that she wished me not to be unhappy on her account, because Jesus was still precious to her soul—and she entreated me to be unreservedly the Lord’s, to be wholly devoted to his service. I pray God I may be obedient to the dying exhortation of my dear wife. Thursday night, she praised the Lord with a loud voice. A little after 4 A. M. on Friday, I found her dying, but have to praise God she was recollect. I asked her if she was happy in her soul—she answered, yes. Her breathing was so quick, that she could with difficulty speak to me—her hands and feet were already cold—and her pulse fluttering. Her respiration was so hurried that she could hardly utter two words together. I again asked her if she loved the Lord Jesus Christ, she answered yes, and spoke no more.”

“ I now felt that I could gladly have died with her—and though I would have given the world, if I had had it, for her life, on my own account and the children’s—yet on her account, I could praise God, I was perfectly resigned. It seemed that she was gone but a little before me—that she had escaped from the evil to come.”

This interesting narrative of God's dealings with his soul, this simple and touching disclosure of the secrets of his heart, will, I doubt not, be read by many with a measure of the feeling under which it was written. It affords opportunity for many observations which might be made to corroborate his statements, and perhaps to qualify one or two expressions, which in a more advanced state of his experience, he would not have used, without some additional and explanatory remarks. Instead of dwelling on this narrative, however, it will be proper in this place to connect it with the events which befel him during the period in question. As soon as God had changed his heart, he determined instantly to break off all connection with his irreligious acquaintances. Besides the other gaieties in which he had allowed himself, he was a member of a card club, and stood pledged to several parties at the time. Without hesitation or delay, he wrote to the persons concerned, informed them in few and decisive terms of the change of his views, and his resolution to decline his engagements of the kind, for this time and for ever. He was right in doing so, and few who fear God will call the propriety of his resolution in question; but whether in following out his purpose to effect, he acted with all the prudence in the world, is a question. It answered the end of dissolving all familiar ac-

quaintance between him and his gay associates, and the hue and cry was raised, echoed and re-echoed, that he had lost his reason. His friends were offended beyond measure, and so public, and among some classes, so general was the scandal conceived at his change of life and conversation, so unqualified their censure and contempt of him for becoming a Methodist, that his partner in business insisted that their connection should be broken up. It was not likely that the one would yield his convictions, or the other his prejudices, and the dissolution accordingly took place. I know not upon what terms of agreement they were united, nor upon what accommodation of interests they parted; nor is it of much importance. Certain, however, it is, they did separate, and the Doctor began to practise separately from that time. The first families of the neighbourhood had employed them, and these preferred his late partner to him. This was not the case with all, for the religious public felt interested in his welfare on this occasion, and honoring his piety, and respecting his talents, employed him thenceforward. Members of the Society of Friends were particularly disposed to favour him, and in the end, his separate business was of fully as much value to him, if not of greater, than his share in the emoluments of the partnership had been. Thus did God verify to his

experience the words of the promise, “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Nor was this the whole, by a great deal, which resulted from his decision and zeal for God. In no small degree by his instrumentality, first one and then another member of that very family was won to the truth as it is in Jesus, and even the old gentleman himself, his partner, became obedient to the faith. Some of them are now ornaments to the church of Christ in this world, and some are departed, we doubt not, to be added to the “ redeemed from the earth.”

His own account states, that soon after his conversion to God, Mrs Taft also became a partaker of the heavenly gift ; and mention is made of her visit to Mr Longden’s family, of Sheffield, and of the benefit she derived from her intercourse with that pious household. I have two excellent letters addressed by her to Mrs L., which might further serve to exalt her character, and exhibit her tenderness of conscience and her zeal for God ; but let it suffice to say, that for each and both of them she was distinguished. Her father became savingly acquainted with the truth, doubtless, being won by the conversation of his children. Besides these, the Doctor was useful to very many.

I should sin against my own conscience were

I to omit the mention of the following circumstance, so honorable to the memory of the departed. After his conversion, he was one day in conversation with a young man of a respectable family, with whom he was connected, and had occasion to reprove him for some improper expression of which he had made use. The reproof went to his heart, and thoughtless as he had been, so deeply did he feel it, that passing in an instant from gay to grave, he begged the Doctor to pray with him. The transition was so sudden and so unexpected, that at first he thought him in jest, and hesitated to comply. In the end, the young man was convinced of sin, and was brought to God. Some religious book lent him, falling under his father's eye, provoked so much of his displeasure, that knowing from whence it came, he wrote Dr Taft a very rude letter on the occasion. But this did not prevent the spread of conviction from heart to heart; the young man's sister became convinced of sin; then one of the servants was awakened. The father now lost all patience and self-command, and at once, to extinguish the flame, he took the resolution of banishing his son from his house. The young man driven from his home, was received with open arms by the Doctor, and not only so, but he engaged to give him 50l. per annum, till he should be better provided for. God hath the

hearts of all men in his hands ; he touched that of the father, and he yielded to the gracious impression ; he took his son again to his house, assisted him in the studies preparatory to entering the church, and of that church he is now a valuable member and minister.

I can hardly conceive of a more noble act of liberality than this ; and if any thing could add to the generosity of this action, it was this, that utter stranger as he was to all reserve, he never, even in conversation about that very family, so much as hinted the matter to me, and it may be presumed he mentioned it to no one, unless too nearly connected to be kept from the knowledge of any thing that concerned him.

Pretty much about the time of his uniting himself to the Methodists, the separation of those who attached themselves to Mr Kilham's party took place. The questions which rose out of the occasion were keenly agitated in Nottingham, and his leader left our body, taking with him as many as he could of his class. The Doctor with all the fervour and simplicity of a babe in Christ, and without much enquiry or reflection, went with him. He was absent from us, however, for a very short time only ; but in that brief interval it did so happen that the annual meeting of that body took place in Nottingham, and he was sent to it in the character of lay delegate. This accounts for the fact of

his name appearing in the report of the proceedings on that occasion. On mature reflection, he returned to the body from whence he set out, and having departed from us for a short season, he returned to abide with us for ever.

Having had now some experience in the things of God, he was made a class-leader, and was eminently useful in this department of the vineyard. He was one who planted and watered with much success ; large increase was given. Three classes, if not more, rose out of the little company he met ; and his own account gives us to understand that his personal piety was one that deepened and widened in its progress. His piety was so consistent, that in his own house as elsewhere, he was the instrument of much good. However careless a servant might come to his house, the Lord generally made him the instrument of saving her soul. Domestic religion is one of the best proofs of personal piety.

Like most young converts, he thought himself called of God to preach to others that gospel, whose saving power he had himself experienced. He imagined the delivering of a sermon was a very easy work, and on one occasion, as a pious friend tells the matter, after sermon he took him by the arm, and said, he thought he could himself deliver a better discourse from the same text than that which they had just heard. He went home, wrote a dis-

course, and in the afternoon read it to his friend, and offered to preach it in some country place on the ensuing Sabbath. They went accordingly to Radcliff together, and for the first time the Doctor ascended the pulpit. The preliminary services of praise and prayer he got through with comfort, and then proceeded to give out his text. The discourse was divided into three heads ; but he had hardly proceeded the length of three sentences before every idea left him ; he laboured for utterance, but in vain, the perspiration flowed from every part of his face ; he could not recover from his agitation, and with much good sense and proper feeling, he told the congregation that he could not surmount his embarrassment, and therefore proposed to convert the service into a prayer meeting. They did so, and it was a season of much refreshment from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. This self-confidence was never displayed a second time. Few men of equal ability have ever been more diffident, or more frequently overcome of needless fears. So humbled was he on this occasion, that some time elapsed before he could be emboldened to use his talent, and then it was with a very different spirit, and with a very different result.*

* Mr Tatham, of Nottingham, an old disciple, states a

It is evident from his letters and otherwise, that he became a regular local preacher, and I believe he laboured with acceptance and fruit. He doubtless at times entertained the idea of relinquishing every worldly engagement, and giving up himself entirely to the work of the ministry, but there was a barrier in the way, in the opposition of Mrs Taft's views and wishes,

circumstance concerning the Doctor not a little remarkable. Three months before his conversion to God, Mr Tatham had occasion to call for his professional assistance, in consequence of a severe blow he had received on the head from a jar propelled violently from his shop window. A horse had been observed, of itself, to walk backward to the window, and then to dash its hind feet through the panes, and thus at the distance of several feet, Mr T. received the injury alluded to. For the first time, he saw the Doctor on this occasion ; and the morning after their first interview, it was suddenly and forcibly impressed on his mind, that he should tell him he was a chosen vessel to bear the gospel tidings. Mr T. resisted the impression, and thought it worse than absurd to be the bearer of such a communication, to a man of the gay and dissipated character which common report assigned to him. He could not get rid of this impression, and was long unwilling to act upon it. At length he pledged himself to embrace the first opportunity which should occur, of doing so in private. Week after week, and month after month passed away without such an opportunity presenting itself. At length he heard to his astonishment, that Dr T. was a converted man, and had cast in his name and his lot with the Methodists. From that time they became intimately and affectionately acquainted with each other.

to such an undertaking. She became, as related, a truly pious woman, but such was the delicacy of her constitution, that she shrunk from the idea of frequent removal, and the being without a certain dwelling place. Perhaps the fears of this amiable woman magnified the difficulties of itinerancy : at all events, her husband felt it to be his duty to thank God for the change wrought in her, and to banish from his mind the idea of over-ruling her wishes in a point of such great importance. After a season, she was taken hence to bear a part in the resurrection of the just, and the bereaved widower was left alone. When he recovered from the overwhelming sense of his loss, his wish to become an itinerant revived, and was certainly encouraged by Mr Bramwell, then stationed in Nottingham. How those convictions of duty first took possession of his mind, and the history of their growth and maturity, we cannot detail, for as he did not enter into correspondence on the subject, and does not appear to have kept a diary, the matter was between himself and Mr B. They are both in a better country ; they may not communicate with us, and we cannot communicate with them.

Beyond a doubt he was encouraged in the idea of becoming an itinerant from the success which attended his labours as a local preacher. The following extracts of letters written be-

tween the period of his wife's death, and that of his entering the ministry, will exhibit the depth and sincerity of his piety, his wish for usefulness in a more extended sphere, and the countenance which the Master of assemblies afforded him in preaching the gospel. They are addressed to his brother, the Rev. Z. Taft.

Nottingham, Wednesday.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—If when the Lord uses you, you determine not to think highly of yourself, nor to suffer any one to speak in flattering terms of you in your presence; if, in short, you continue in the dust of abasement, giving God the glory, you will continue to be useful; but if you become puffed up, the Lord will give you barren times afterward. Continue in much prayer, and you will be happy and useful—endeavour to feel for souls—your everlasting crown depends on your present labours. I have lately had an uncommon desire to itinerate, and seem as if I could willingly make any sacrifice—the Lord make my way plain! If I had had this desire so strong before our last quarter-day, should certainly have been proposed to the next Conference. If I am but in the order of God, all will be well—May he bless you and keep you.

I remain in haste, your's, &c.

H. TAFT.

Nottingham.

DEAR BROTHER,—They have a blessed prospect in Leeds and Wakefield circuits, and we have great reason to be thankful that the new converts in this circuit abide so faithful in general. I believe I am called to travel, and feel desirous of rising above every hindrance—however, Mr Bramwell advises me not to give up business till Conference, for

fear some mistaken friend in the connection should imagine that I was an indolent person, who wanted to get into the priest's office from wrong motives. 'The best of all is, my soul is quite alive to God, and I feel entirely engaged in the work—in writing skeletons, preaching, class-leading, or otherwise.

Your's affectionately,

H. TAFT.

Nottingham, Friday Afternoon.

DEAR BROTHER,—Inform me in your next in what state your circuit is, and how the people receive you, and especially whether you find the Lord to be frequently assisting you in preaching. I had the most glorious time last Sunday evening at Bingham, I have ever known. One found peace with God during preaching, and the society was amazingly raised and filled with love. It was an unprofitable time in the afternoon, but I have frequently found that I might not be eminently used twice in one day—Oh ! for more humility and gratitude. Let us be always wrestling for usefulness, and constantly expecting the answer of prayer. Oh that God may *fully* save us, and others by our instrumentality. My dear Brother, watch and pray, be continually importunate, and the Lord will use you. I fully intend giving up business very soon; I wish to be more fully in the work. The Lord give us missionary spirits, for we shall have many trials, but if faithful, great glory.

Your's as ever,

H. TAFT.

The first of these letters was written before the Conference of 1801 ; the last of them as it would appear, (for they are not dated) about a year after, and a very short period before he

was accepted as a probationer by the Methodist Conference. He was received on trial, August, 1802.

In the second extract given above, an apprehension is expressed, as having been suggested to the writer, lest his admission into the ministry should be resisted, on an unfounded notion that he was actuated by improper motives in offering himself to the disposal of Conference. To his friends, it is well known, however, that he made considerable pecuniary sacrifices on this occasion. He had been nearly ten years a practitioner in Nottingham, and his professional character was now known and respected. After dissolving partnership with Mr M. his private practice was very considerable; and the probabilities are, that had he remained where he was, it would have become much more so. The returns of his business amounted to some hundreds per annum; and when the small allowances made to a probationer in our body during four years, and the moderate though decent income of a married man at the end of that term, are taken into the account, it will be apparent, that he never could have desired to be put into the priest's office for the sake of a morsel of bread.

That his professional acquirements were considerable, there is ample evidence. In one department of his profession he had acquired a

peculiar degree of skill; and were it not improper to do so, instances of its successful exertion in cases singularly trying might be given.

It was the opinion of most who knew him, that he had talents for the work of the ministry; it was beyond a doubt that he had been honored in winning souls to Christ; his personal piety was unquestioned by all, as many as were fit judges in such a matter; and the object of his wish to itinerate was, that he might save his own soul, and the souls of such as should hear him. Add to all these considerations, the fact that Providence had mysteriously removed every hindrance out of his way, and I think the opinion of the truly pious will be a decided and unanimous one, that he was called of God to preach the gospel.

In closing this chapter, as it brings us to the period of his bidding adieu to medicine as a profession, a remark or two may be allowed on the subject of his views and talents as a practitioner.

He seems to have formed his views of practice very much on the system of the elder Hamilton, and to a judicious adoption of it, he owed much of the success which attended his prescriptions. He was so remarkably successful both before and after entering the ministry, in removing disease, that an excellent man once observed concerning him, that he really

thought the Doctor had the gift of healing. There is, as it is well known to the profession, in addition to theoretical knowledge, a peculiar tact in the discernment of disease, which practice only can obtain for a man. It is a faculty of discriminating among a number of symptoms what are those of first importance as marking out the disease, and what are those accidental ones which belong to the particular case, and are of little moment in themselves. Dr Taft had this faculty in a high degree, and rarely formed a judgement of any case that needed subsequently to be changed or corrected : and the diffidence he had of his own powers in other respects, was strikingly contrasted by the unhesitating decision of his medical judgements.

In a work like the present, it would be improper to amplify remarks of this kind, or to go into details ; but it would hardly be proper to pass over the subject without stating, that as a medical man, he was a judicious, clear-headed, and eminently successful practitioner.

CHAPTER VI.

At the Conference of 1802, Dr Taft was received upon trial, and appointed to the Doncaster Circuit under the superintendance of Mr Hickling.

To enter upon this new and untried way of life was a serious step. Itinerancy, with all its trials and advantages, lay before him. Trials and advantages, this method of feeding the churches most certainly has, and those of a kind altogether peculiar. It was the earliest resort of preachers of the gospel, and was so, by necessity; we know who it was that said of himself and others—"we have no certain dwelling place"—and the thing could not have been otherwise. The whole world was then an "out-field population," it was a spiritual desert altogether unreclaimed from its natural wildness, and those who first cast abroad the seed of the word, cultivated portions of the soil here and there and every where, that these might be so many points from which the word might spread round and about on every side. At the great period of the reformation of religion in England, there existed almost an equal necessity for itinerancy. The labourers were few, and the uncultivated soil was large. Accordingly, un-

der the Sixth Edward, itinerant preachers were instructed to take separate districts of the kingdom through which to extend their ministry. At the beginning of the last century, there were doubtless both in the establishment and among the dissenters, eminently able and holy men, but the prevailing character of the ministry was quite the reverse. The glory of the reformation had departed from most places of worship ; the doctrine of justification by faith was clouded and obscured, or it was evaded or denied, and the mass of the people were living just as they might have done,

“ Had Saul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew.”

We are fallen on happier times, but that all this, and more than this is true, of the period in question, may be asserted on authority, that by very many will be undisputed. Mr Southey is acknowledged by all to be a man of a richly furnished mind, one capable of deep and persevering research, so that he can make the fruit of his study acceptable to many who would shrink from the same themes derived from a less accomplished pen. Even the life of Wesley by him has been read with delight by the gayest of the gay. Decidedly objectionable, as many expressions in that work are held to be by the christian public, no one of them will deny the writer the credit of having drawn a just, but gloomy picture of the state of religion, in

the beginning of the eighteenth century. According to his shewing, then, there never was a period in which there was greater need for an itinerant ministry, than that in which the Wesleys were raised up. With the convictions Mr Wesley had upon the subject, he felt it to be a step which must be adopted to waken a slumbering church, and a people among whom christianity was forgotten. Itinerancy involves a necessity of there being less of the pastor than of the preacher in the minister of the gospel, but there are facilities for overtaking pastoral duties in Methodism, which exist no where else in an equal degree. The division of the society, or communion, into little associations of from 12 to 30 persons, assembled weekly under the direction of an experienced person, whose peculiar care they are, is an excellent provision for securing pastoral care and attention. The recent multiplication of circuits and preachers enables the latter to take a much larger part in visitings, than once they could have done. An Itinerant stands in a very particular relationship to his numerous congregations, and among the points peculiar to him personally are these—he has no settled home, and no abiding claims on one congregation, and they have no long continued interest in him. The infirmities of his age are not to be solaced by the return of affectionate attentions from those who enjoyed the

successful labours of his youth. He is removed from them, and they from him. He is forgotten by them, and they have passed from his remembrance. The intimacy between preacher and people, which takes place, and grows up into an affectionate and endeared connection, in the case of a settled minister and his congregation, can have no existence. But while this, and all which it implies is allowed, it ought to be stated that there are great public benefits to be put over against those admitted disadvantages, private and public. A variety is secured to the pulpit. And what is of more importance than variety, by means of itinerancy, provision is made for the repetition of the same things without tameness or monotony. A settled preacher preaches at length on the subject of justification, and extends his remarks through several discourses; but having done so, he does not feel himself at liberty to resume the subject, or repeat his observations for a much longer period perhaps than is consistent with the wants of his people. The same subject discoursed by different men, presents itself with a freshness and an interest it could hardly have in so many ministrations from one individual. The arrival and early ministrations of ministers renews and revives attention to truths which can never grow old, but which we are in great danger of neglecting, or but slightly attending

to. Their departure and latest discourses are well calculated to waken salutary recollections of the period in which all earthly connections shall be broken up. Each man has his several gift, and the whole body may be well served by every member and every organ in turn. Even the excellent Mr J. Newton is said to have lost much of his impressive influence by his long residence in Olney, and to have become another man when transplanted to London. Itinerancy is the life-blood of Methodism. By means thereof, every circuit is interested in the whole connection—and every preacher in his brother. The circuits, from this cause, are induced to afford assistance to each other, and the preachers feel themselves bound to do what in them lies to benefit and assist their brethren. Moreover, a preacher is secured against private interest, which might in other circumstances be advanced, by sacrificing the discipline of the church, to the wishes of an opulent individual. The certainty of his speedy removal from the place, is a security against the existence, or the continuance of the evil. That discipline he is both enabled and emboldened to maintain by the consideration (I am not to be understood as though I regarded divine support as less than of the first importance)—by the consideration that no censure of the whole or part of a congregation, can injure him if he do his

duty, and he is not to be benefited by their united applause if he neglect it. He is subject to censure elsewhere, from which private influence cannot shelter him, if he is found to have neglected the rules, by which the body is cemented and united. Methodism derives its peculiar faculty of extending itself from its itinerancy. It can send its preachers to the remotest extremities of its geographical limits, and secure to the individuals an income equal to their maintenance derived from the contributions of opulent societies—and from these it further derives means of assisting the chapel concerns in several destitute circuits.

This digression, too long, perhaps, for the occasion, but abundantly too short for the subject, may be excused, as we are now to regard Dr Taft as an itinerant Methodist preacher. He went to Doncaster according to appointment, having first settled his temporal affairs, and boarded his children Ann and Mary, in his father's house at Sandyacre, and thus without wife or children, he repaired to his station. That he lived and laboured in the spirit of the gospel, is apparent from the following extract of a letter addressed to his brother.

“ *Doncaster, April 4.*

“ DEAR BROTHER,—The country parts of this circuit are rising much, but the town continues as heretofore. We have had many souls given us in different places, I preach-

ed thrice yesterday in the town, held a love-feast, and afterwards met the Society, and received ten members on trial. I never had a better day in my life; the love-feast was a season of great power, and I enjoyed much unction and liberty in preaching; one soul was set at liberty, and a general spirit of expectation has gone throughout the circuit. I am much recovered since I wrote last; my voice is given me again, but my yesterday's labour was almost too much for me. You know what it is to feel worn out on a Monday, after a hard day's work. I am sometimes almost stupefied with study, but this is no new thing to you. I have reason to praise God my soul is much alive to him. The people wish me to remain another year with them, but I have no intention of doing so at present. Mr Hickling is very kind, but I have little society with which to associate, and in these circumstances I feel very sensibly the absence of my children. They are only so much the dearer to me from being out of my sight. Give my most heart-felt love to sister Mary, and do let me hear from you directly,

Your affectionate Brother,

HENRY TAFT.

In this appointment he was generally acceptable, and in many cases was useful; and perhaps was so much the more so from practising gratuitously among the poor. It is a standing rule in the body, that no preacher, after admission, shall engage in business of any kind, and the law is founded on the most just and sound principles. If any exception can occur, it is that of a medical man prescribing for the poor: but a licence to do so ought not indiscriminately to be granted by Conference, to per-

sons instructed for the profession, whom they may receive into their body. There are restrictions and limitations under which alone, the privilege, in consistency with the existing law, can be conceded to any individual. He should not be allowed to receive fees—a permission to do which would be attended with two evils, a temptation to cultivate practice to the neglect of ministerial duty, and thus a misemployment of time, to say nothing of a misdirection of talent in the study and attention which cases would require; and another evil arising out of the practice, would be a temptation to prescribe for the sake of the fee, and the unpleasant feelings created among all parties concerned, by the impropriety of attempting to cultivate two professions at once.

Dr Taft practised gratuitously; his patients were chiefly the poor who had no friend—an act of charity, so much the more valuable, as at that time, in towns, dispensaries were not so numerous as they are now—and in remote country places, there were fewer surgeons than now is the case. It is an act of justice to his memory, further to mention, that he would not accept a fee, and that the only year of his itinerary in which was forced upon him by the gratitude of persons whom he was instrumental in recovering to health, any sum worth mention, he carefully kept it till the arrival of the Conference, and then laid it upon the

table, as belonging rather to the connection than to himself. I think it right to make this statement, as remarks equally ungenerous, and untrue, have been made on the subject.

It may be said, however, that though his attentions to the sick were disinterested, they must necessarily have occupied a larger portion of his time, than it was right in him to have taken from the service of the ministry. To that service, perhaps, no body of established clergy bestow a larger part of their time, than those of the church of Scotland, and yet it is well known, that several of them have studied medicine less or more, and some of them have graduated, with the view of extending their influence and usefulness. It is to be remembered, the case of Dr Taft was very different from that of a young man, however accomplished in the theory of his profession, who had never engaged in actual practice. He had been for ten years a practitioner in Nottingham, to say nothing of his previous opportunities of acquiring professional knowledge, and of course the treatment of disease was become a matter altogether familiar to him, and he could give his advice and attention with greatly less study and anxiety, than one less experienced could have done. He gave an hour so many times a week to receiving patients who came to him for advice, and comparatively speaking, he rarely

visited persons in their own houses. That he was made a blessing to many, is beyond a doubt. Numbers to this day regard him as the instrument of Providence in lengthening their days, and sweetening the current of life. Like an humble disciple of his Lord, he went about healing disease and instructing ignorance ; and was so much esteemed, that it was greatly against the inclinations and wishes of the Doncaster Societies, he removed from them at the Conference of 1803. He loved them as sincerely as they esteemed him, but he wanted self-possession, and feared to remain a second year, lest he should grow stale on their hands. Such was his constitutional diffidence, that he never could trust himself in the pulpit to repeat the Lord's prayer *memoriter*, and I have the card on which it is printed, and which he always took with him.

At Barnsley, the lamented Mr Sargeant was his superintendant, under whose roof he lived during that year. A single extract from his correspondence will shew that he continued as devout and zealous as heretofore :—

Barnsley, December 25, 1803.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am living more in constant prayer than ever, and I am convinced God will use us much more than ever, if we get and retain the spirit of agony, lifting day and night our circuits before God. Mr Bramwell has written to me, recommending morning prayer meetings, and

though I formerly thought my health would not admit of early rising, I mean to try once more. You cannot conceive how low one part of my circuit is; it is far below the freezing point; scarcely the form of godliness is left in some, others are contented therewith; the Lord only can raise them up, but I do not despair. One part of the circuit is in a very improving state; a number of backsliders have been healed, a few converted, and the society generally blessed with new life. Blessed be the name of God.

Let us determine to rise earlier, to continue instant in prayer; to lead every one to God; in short, never to rest without a daily increase in holiness and usefulness.

Your's, &c.

H. TAFT.

This, and the foregoing extracts from his correspondence, afford us glimpses into his very heart and soul. They were written in a style so easy, unconstrained, and even so careless, that it is almost superfluous to say, he never imagined they would meet any eye but that of an only and attached brother. But they are so many proofs of his simplicity of heart, and his sincere piety toward God and before men.

He was active and useful in this appointment, as he had been in the former, but he was subject to a constitutional weakness of the organs of voice, and as he often exerted himself according to his ability, and beyond it, without sufficient caution at the time, or proper care afterwards, he was made now to suffer the consequences of over-exertion. Toward

the close of this year, his voice entirely failed him, and he imagined it was a failure not of a temporary kind, but one that was likely to continue with him through life. The warmth of his feelings, which magnified to his apprehension the importance of every thing pleasing that occurred to him, exasperated his sense of every evil which befel him. He thought his opportunities of public usefulness were over, and so fully convinced was he that he should not be able to take another appointment, that he came to the resolution of sitting down. His name was not continued on the minutes for 1804, for two very sufficient reasons—he was only a probationer, and not actually admitted into the connection ; and I know not in any case where a person has been obliged to desist from public labour before his admission as one of the body, that his name has been continued—and further, his impression was, not that he had desisted for a season, but that he was disabled for life to undertake the laborious duties of itinerancy.

CHAPTER VII.

He was now unable to pursue his ministerial career ; but with the exception of such a loss of voice as amounted to an incapacity of speaking in public, his health was good, and his constitution unimpaired. His purpose was to resume medical practice, and whether with an intention of graduating in order to act as a physician, or merely with the view of profitably employing a favourable occasion of increasing his medical knowledge, I know not, but he determined to spend the winter at the university of Edinburgh. Accordingly he went, and entered himself as a student in the practice of medicine, chemistry, midwifery, and anatomy. He attended the medical and surgical lectures at the hospital, and was a pupil besides of Dr Barclay's. Dr Taft had many advantages as a student—he came to the lecture rooms with the product of 12 or more years of medical experience at home and abroad, and was well able to appreciate the opinions advanced from the chair, and the practice pursued in the hospital. The celebrated Dr Gregory was then in the fulness of his intellectual vigour. His vast research had acquired for him a large fund of

all that is valuable in the ancient and modern literature of medicine ; and his highly classical and opulent mind knew well how to clothe the stores of medical erudition in language so pure and so tasteful, that the vehicle of instruction was not less delightful than the instruction itself was important. Then again, for a series of years Dr G. had been engaged in an extensive practice. This was not the case for several years after he was known as a scholar, and as the heir of a father's talent.* For ten years he used to say, he had looked in vain for practice, at length, added he, it pleased the public all at once to make me a great physician. Men of eminence have been indebted for their first distinctions to circumstances, to all appearance, of a purely accidental kind.† Dr G. well de-

* The elder Gregory it was who wrote the work, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters.*

† A singular event, which threatened the extinction of his hopes rather than the realization of them, is said to have been the means of introducing a physician into practice. It was then the custom for physicians to frequent certain coffee-houses, where they were always to be found except when professionally engaged. A certain M. D. was sent for from one of them to attend a lady of title. The message found him half drunk, but he nevertheless hastened to the patient. She was lying on a sofa, and when he applied his hand to the wrist, was so confused, that he could not count the pulse. He started, cried out with an oath—dead drunk, and hastened out of the house. Next morning, the nobleman at whose house this

served the fame he enjoyed as being at once master of the theory and practice of his profession ; a skilful practitioner and an able teacher. Towards the close of his life, he became tedious in his lectures, and divided his course into two winter sessions ; a practice peculiarly inconvenient to the students of his class. Of the other professors whose classes were attended by Dr Taft, it is high praise to say, they were not unworthy to be associated with Dr G. in the chairs of the University. He was a diligent student, and as successful as laborious in the acquisition of useful knowledge. But no pursuits of a scientific kind seem to have impaired his zeal for God, or his love to man. The following letter written in the spring, shews that his voice was then restored, and that it was well employed.

“ Edinburgh, Saturday Night.

“ DEAR BROTHER,—If you had any idea how continually I am engaged, you could never have thought of my writing a preface and plan of the work in which you are engaged. From

scene was acted, waited upon the physician, and to his surprise addressed him thus—I admire, Sir, your discernment ; my lady was certainly in the state you supposed, though no suspicion of the kind was entertained. I trust you will in honor keep the matter a secret, and I pledge myself to introduce you into as much practice as I can recommend you to. The Doctor kept his own counsel, and her ladyship too, and if he ever stated the circumstance, he did not divulge the names.

nine o'clock till twelve every day we are employed at lectures ; from twelve till one I attend the practice and operations at the Infirmary ; from one till four, I am engaged with three more lectures ; I then dine, and from five till seven I attend two other lectures, Saturdays excepted, when we rise at four. Besides all this, I have necessarily to consult authors on the subjects lectured upon, and to write daily the substance of the most important lectures ; so that you see my time is fully occupied. Of course, I wish at all events, to acquire all the professional information possible. The people here are very kind to me, and the Lord has blest me at least to one soul. A young lady was awakened one night while I was speaking. Lively preaching is far more acceptable to the people than any thing else. Our love-feast was held last Monday night, and it really was a blessed time ; we certainly have some who are truly alive to God, and desirous for the spread of the work. You will be glad to hear that my health is completely re-established ; indeed I may say with truth it is better than it has been for several years past. I continue to preach every Sunday, once and sometimes twice. If the Lord makes my way plain I will take a circuit next Conference, but I really cannot speak to this at present. I very often find my mind quite unsettled about this, and what to do I know not ; however, I think my duty at present is, to keep close to my studies and watch the openings of Providence. Do not forget to pray for me, I assure you I need your prayers. God bless you and own you more than ever.

“ Yours, as ever,

“ HENRY TAFT.”

The case alluded to in this letter was not the only one in which the Lord blessed his labours of love. This we learn from another letter, which perhaps it is not of importance to insert. He continued to study with very considerable ap-

plication and success, till the close of the session, and then, as at the date of this letter, felt at a loss how to dispose of himself. On the one hand, his voice being completely restored, the reason which had induced him to leave the ministry existed no longer, and as his heart was in the work, there seemed no reason why he should not resume a duty which necessity only had obliged him to decline ; on the other, his voice had frequently failed him, and it seemed more than probable that it would not permanently serve the purposes of the ministry. In this undecided state, he turned his thoughts to obtaining a degree in medicine, and practising as a physician. In the accomplishment of this object, considerable difficulties presented themselves, of which probably he had not been aware previous to his coming to the University. From candidates for graduation, an attendance for three or more years, was required at this or some other college. This law does not take into account any course of lectures, or in fact any term of study pursued in London, on the ground that the teachers of Anatomy and Medicine there are not formed into a university, and have not the privileges of a chartered school. It is not my business to enquire whether this law has the liberality of modern times in its complexion, or savors somewhat of the spirit of a corporation. It is

much easier to insinuate censure, than to point out the most befitting method of framing the laws of a school of science.

It has been objected to the method of conducting the medical examinations and exercises in Edinburgh and Glasgow, that as science and not literature is the thing to be expected from a graduate, it is absurd to examine in a tongue of which neither professor nor pupil is so completely master as of that in which they were born. According to Hugo Arnot, the time has not long gone by when the proceedings of the courts of law were all of them conducted in Latin, with the exception, of course, of criminal trials. The old custom has been abandoned, and classical English has been substituted for barbarous Latin. But that the bar is less learned for the change, has never been pretended. All this may be, but the cases are not parallel. Though the greatest purity of language may not characterise the examinations, the written exercises are many of them no mean compositions, and prove their authors to have imbibed at once a portion of the literature and the science of Heberden and Gregory. It would not be convenient to add another to the prescriber's examinations, merely with the view of ascertaining the graduate's classical attainments, and it is proper that a man who purposes to occupy the upper walks of his profession, should

not be wanting in "accomplished scholarship."

This digression may seem to be slenderly attached to the thread of the narration, but we were diverted into it by mentioning the terms of graduation in Edinburgh. At Glasgow, only two years of attendance are required, and two courses of lectures in London in addition thereto, but Dr Taft could not avail himself of this lighter requirement. In these circumstances he thought of St Andrew's. The city of that name was once the capital of Scotland, but for ages has been gradually decaying, and is now only the ruin of itself. Its university has a long list of professors in the Almanack, but with the exception of those in philosophy and divinity, they do not teach in their respective departments. They have still, however, the power of conferring degrees, and upon what terms they themselves think proper. Personal attendance at the university, as it could be attended with no profit, is entirely dispensed with. But whether this is done within the terms of their statutes, or by connivance and a neglect of them, I know not. What is required in practice is a recommendation of the candidate to the senate, as deserving the highest honors of the profession, signed by two physicians, graduates of some university. It ought to be stated, that without such an instrument, no one can obtain

a degree, and it is left to the honor and good principle of the parties who give the recommendation, to do so with discretion and wisdom. And it is farther proper to mention, that the abuses of this discretion, loose as the terms of proceeding may be, wide and unrestrained as the licence of recommendation is, are neither many nor flagrant.

I remember many years ago, to have heard Dr Armstrong, (a man hardly second to the first names of the profession) offer two or three valuable remarks on the subject of St Andrew's degrees. A youthful scion of the profession, remarked that he thought them "mean discreditable stuff;" the Doctor observed, a man may do honor to his degree, but his degree can never do honor to him. Many a man of distinguished talent has derived his degree from that university, and has been an honor to his profession; whose circumstances and convenience would not have allowed him to have obtained it elsewhere.*

From St Andrew's Dr Taft obtained his degree; his diploma bears date May 4th, of that year, and is drawn up in the accustomed dignified language of that college.

I may add here, that it is a common error to

* It is certain that Dr Hamilton, professor of midwifery in Edinburgh, derived his degree from St Andrew's, and it is said Dr Duncan did so also.

suppose that the degree is paid for. Now it is paid for in no other sense than that in which every graduate of every University pays for his diploma. On every document of the kind government has a tax, and the college a fee. This is the case in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and equally so at St Andrew's. And it is not true in point of form or of fact, that the degree is sold for the fee ; it is given at the instance of the sponsors who recommend, and the graduate here as any where else, pays the college fees, on receiving the instrument which constitutes him a Doctor in Medicine.

Dr T. returned to Nottingham in May, but did not solicit practice. He longed again to be engaged in the glorious work of winning souls to Christ. This had ever been his most delightful employment, and he now remembered that he was one consecrated by a vow to the service of the altar. Having taken the previous steps, he was again received on trial at the ensuing Conference, and by that body was appointed to Bridlington, in Yorkshire. He now resolved to take his children with him, as they had passed the period of infancy, and might furnish him with as much of domestic happiness as was left to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

In August, 1805, Dr Taft went to his appointment at Bridlington, and found the cause in a very languishing state. He devoted himself unreservedly to whatever might revive or extend, or deepen the work of God. A letter written soon after his arrival in the circuit, describes the state in which he found it, and the spirit in which he entered the Lord's vineyard.

"Bridlington Quay, Oct. 14, 1805."

"DEAR BROTHER,—With the exception of two or three places, this circuit is low to a proverb; few indeed know the pardon of their sins. There was a work about four years ago when my sister (Mrs Z. Taft) was here, but I fear since then, the good has in general been dying away; however, the Lord is with me, and I have already had several seals, though by no means what I hope for. I have been only once round the circuit. We are about only half as much at home as you are, which is very trying; but if the Lord raises the circuit, I shall feel no trial too great. My strength sometimes fails me on the Sunday, for besides preaching three times, I have often to give the sacrament, hold love-feasts, and conduct prayer meetings. I have taken lodgings for my children and father, and expect them next week. A work has broke out in one village, and twelve persons have begun to meet in class; most of them are happy in God. Four are awakened at Flamborough, and have be-

gun also to meet; two found peace here last week. When I was over here on a visit last year from Hull, a gentleman of York was awakened. He has sent me an account of his life, in a long letter. His lady came here this bathing season, and she was awakened while I was preaching; they have invited me to visit them at the District.

"I am very much engaged in giving my advice to the sick all over the circuit, as there is no physician hereabouts. Some of the surgeons send me their bad cases for my opinion; all this is sometimes very troublesome, but my influence is evidently increased, and as I hope, my usefulness also. Pray for me, and believe me to be, with love to Sister and Niece,

Your's, as ever,

"H. TAFT."

The labours of the preachers on this circuit were so far owned of God, that during this year an increase of 120 souls appears by the minutes of 1805 and 1806 to have been given to them. They laboured in word and in doctrine, and by patience and pureness, approved themselves to be men of God; and the success of their labours proved that their mission was from the head of the Church.

In 1806, we find Dr T. appointed to Huddersfield, and from his correspondence it would appear that considerable difficulties were opposed to the success of the preachers in that circuit, in consequence of the effects produced by the separation of the party formed by Mr Kilham. The connection, however, rose superior to the shock it received, and the storm only served to

strike the roots of the oak so much deeper into the soil. During this year he maintained his intercourse with the Bridlington circuit, by visiting them for a fortnight. His personal piety was as deep as ever, and he speaks of very gracious manifestations of the divine love to his soul. Like Simeon, he waited for God, and like him he waited not in vain. He alludes to some very severe temptations to which he was exposed, but he adds, that he was delivered from them. As yet, "his children were about him,"—but at the close of this ecclesiastical year, he was called to sustain a very painful bereavement in the loss of the elder of his daughters. She had been slightly indisposed previous to his going to the Liverpool Conference, 1807; but the illness, however serious in its issue, had only those light and equivocal symptoms which are often the unsuspected harbingers of hydrocephalus, or water in the head, in its earliest advent. Without any serious apprehensions, he left the child and her sister to the care of a servant, and repaired to the annual meeting of his brethren. In a few days, he was given to understand that appearances had become alarming—he hastened home, but only arrived in time to witness the departure of his dear child. He writes to Mr Z. Taft:

Wednesday, 11 o'clock.

DEAR BROTHER,—About an hour ago, my dear little girl

breathed her last. When insensible, she sometimes asked Fanny to pray with her, and sometimes talked of seeing her mother. This was the more remarkable, as she scarcely ever mentioned her while in health, and never that I know of, during her affliction, while she was sensible. Perhaps she might be her ministering spirit sent to bring her soul to God. I feel very sensibly, but resignation to the will of God, and a consciousness of the happiness of my little angel, support my mind. As another tie to earth is removed, I trust to live more for heaven than ever.

Your's,

H. TAFT.

Ann was only nine years of age when she became afflicted with this awful disorder—she was only three when her mother departed—and it is very remarkable, that in dying circumstances she should talk about her sainted parent. Impressions of the presence of the deceased have often been entertained by persons themselves near death. It is our business to state the fact —let every man form his own comment.

By the Conference then sitting at Liverpool, he was appointed to the Sunderland circuit. This was in August, 1807. The appointment took place at his own request, and with the wish of his old and intimate friend Mr Bramwell, who was put down as its superintendant. Between that venerable man and himself, the most cordial friendship prevailed. Each valued in the other those excellencies, which each cultivated in himself. They were both men of prayer, both warmly interested in the prospe-

rity of Zion, both distinguished from most other men by a peculiar simplicity of character, and ardor of zeal ; and though each had excellencies peculiar to himself, these were less remarkable than those which were common to both ; and were only so many points of relief and prominence, which the better fitted them for each other. For some years Dr Taft had been a housekeeper, in order to have his children with him, but now having but one child, he arranged with his affectionate friends, Mr and Mrs Bramwell, for his residing under their roof, with his daughter—an arrangement equally happy for all parties. Mr B. had become acquainted with him at an early and interesting period of his christian experience—he had been an instrument in confirming his faith, instructing and guiding his zeal—he had been a comforter to him when he lost the wife of his youth—he had encouraged and advised him on occasion of his becoming an itinerant—and now he was to receive him as an inmate and a son in the gospel. At the distance of even a few years, it is difficult to gather up the memorials of a preacher's life and labours. The Doctor was a faithful fellow labourer with Mr B. and Mr B. was a friend and a father to him : and though neither were without a few of those trials, temptations, and exercises incident, as the case may be, both to preachers and people,

in life's weary pilgrimage, they were yet encouraged to find that the Redeemer's kingdom was extended, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in their hands.

Comfortable as Dr T. was under the roof of Mr B. he knew that to reside under it beyond the period of the present appointment, was an happiness upon which he could not calculate, nor safely look forward to. He was therefore desirous to have a home of his own. He wished of course, to enter into a second union, and I believe he made the matter the subject of much prayer and reflection. In the life-time of his amiable relict, a due delicacy requires a slight and abstinent mention of her name. The family was a highly respectable one, and suffice it to say, that in Miss Elizabeth White, of Sunderland, he found such a companion and friend as his heart could have wished, and his little daughter just such a mother as could have been wished for her. To Miss W. he was happily and affectionately united for the space of more than 15 years. She bore seven children to him, one of whom never saw the light, till her father was taken hence. From one who knew him well, and esteemed him highly, and who, moreover, was equally able to form a correct opinion, and to express the opinion he had formed, I had the pleasure of obtaining an interesting picture of "the man and his commu-

nication," during the period of this appointment. The reader will infer that I am not at liberty to be more explicit in my acknowledgements ; but am furnished by the authority alluded to, with the material of the following observations :—

"The distinguishing marks of Dr Taft as a man, were a most transparent, infantine simplicity of mind and intention ; a rapid susceptibility of impression from any object or event, or expression that he met with ; and when he found that his judgement, formed on such an impression was incorrect, an equally ready acknowledgment of his error, and an enviable manner of doing this, which disarmed all anger, and even increased one's affection for him. This was the result of a temper naturally pleasant, still farther sweetened by the genuine influence of grace.

"As a minister, he was truly respectable in the pulpit. By which, is not to be understood that he always preached what are called *great* sermons. Sometimes his productions were quite the reverse of any thing to which the epithet could apply, but this was chiefly during the first year of his itinerancy in the circuit. During that period his mind was much harassed by some things which are always unfavourable to a preacher. But during the second year, he was continually improving in unction and spirituali-

ty of doctrine, as well as in manner and language: at no time did he utter an expression of which he had need to be ashamed. Often has he been listened to with delight when he has enjoyed great liberty, and has been assisted in announcing the grand scheme of man's redemption, and analyzing the components of genuine experience, in a style of great elevation, and with imagery well and even tastefully selected."

From his correspondence with his pious brother during the years in question, it is apparent that he felt the same zeal for God, and cultivated the same love to men, that he had entertained in his past experience. He expresses on one occasion a jealousy over himself, lest his givings to the poor were not such as they should have been, and in the confidence of friendship, mentions his purpose to devote £50 per annum to the Lord in future. His letters continue to breathe the spirit of affection, and are characterized by his accustomed openness and unreserve, but perhaps justice may be done to his character without further quotations in this place.

In August, 1809, Dr Taft was appointed to the Shields circuit, and took up his residence in South Shields. About the time of his removal from Sunderland, Mrs Taft was delivered of a fine boy, her first child. The mother

was seriously indisposed, from which indisposition, however, it pleased Almighty God soon to restore her ; but the babe, in consequence probably of his parent's affliction, began to languish, and very soon sunk into an early grave,

“ From which he shall more glorious rise,

“ But not more innocent.”

From Dr T.'s letters, it would appear, that this affliction was greatly sanctified to Mrs T. and to himself. He says, “ by the grace of God, we are determined to live as we have never done ; we have family prayer three times a day ; we rise earlier that we may the better improve our time. My soul is all athirst for a Fletcher's or a Bramwell's spirit.” Of this spirit he happily partook in a considerable measure. It was remarked in the circuit, that before he entered the pulpit, it was his manner to spend some time in prayer, in the spirit of him who cried, “ If thou goest not with me, let me not go.”

This year the word of the messengers of the churches was not in vain—it returned not to him who gave it, either empty or void. At the ensuing Conference, he was re-appointed to Shields, and the intimacy which till death interrupted it, subsisted unbroken and unimpaired, began between Mr Isaac and himself. To this attached friend of his, the writer applied for information, and was furnished in re-

ply with the following interesting communication :—

“ My acquaintance with him was very slight, till we were appointed to travel together in the Shields circuit in 1810. I found him a man of God, whose heart was in his work, and whose labours were blessed to the conversion of many. Mr John Waterhouse was our colleague. We were soon united together in the closest bonds of friendship, and spent a most happy year together.

“ It was in the course of this year, that the pitmen connected with the collieries in the neighbourhood of Newcastle entered into secret associations. They took an oath of fidelity to each other ; and though the object of those who imposed the oath could not exactly be ascertained from the terms of it, yet from the circumstances of terror connected with it, and the known character of those who were most actively concerned in it, serious consequences were justly dreaded. On enquiry, we discovered that a few of our members had entered into the brotherhood, as it was termed. We immediately concerted measures with the preachers in the Newcastle and Sunderland circuits, and set to work. We visited our societies, showed them the unlawfulness of the association, warned those who were clear of it to remain so, and insisted that such as had taken the oath should abjure

it immediately. Those of our people who had entered into the league were the mere dupes of those artful and designing men in whom it originated, and were easily persuaded to withdraw, on being informed of the impropriety of their conduct. Thus the charm of secrecy was dissolved, and the brotherhood was soon annihilated. Dr Taft took a most active part in this business, fearlessly braved the danger of it, and was eminently successful in suppressing it. Those wicked and unreasonable men who were at the head of this affair, were highly exasperated at the preachers, some of whom were waylaid and had to flee for their lives.* Those who have accused the Doctor of a want of courage, should have witnessed the ardor of his zeal in these perilous circumstances.

“ Our revered friend was remarkable for the frankness and ardor of his soul. These qualities fitted him for friendship, and a more sincere

* Mr Isaac was one of those to whom this happened. One evening on his return to Shields from a country place, several persons armed with bludgeons rushed on him from the left side of the road. Mr I. is left-handed (the only one thing sinister that can be imputed to him) and received a heavy blow, that was designed to finish his faculty of breaking up associations, with a parry of his stick; in an instant he ran, and they must have been swift to shed blood who could have overtaken him. The state of popular feeling in the neighbourhood was at that time such as to create the greatest alarm.

friend never lived. He had no secrets of his own, and he could keep none belonging to other people. He imparted his whole heart to those who were intimate with him ; and he made as free with their communications, as they were welcome to do with his. Among friends he considered all things as common, and seemed to be an utter stranger to jealousy and reserve. His openness was sometimes blamed as exceeding the bounds of prudence ; he should have spoken and acted, it has been said, with more caution, especially when he had any important measure to carry. But he could enter into no nice cold calculations as to questions of mere policy. What he believed to be right he zealously pursued, and never masked his real designs under fictitious ones : he let every one know his thoughts ; and though this gave his opponents some advantage, yet the energy of his character carried him with rapidity on his course ; and while others were forming plans of counteraction, he accomplished his object.

“ His susceptible and guileless heart rendered him liable to receive erroneous impressions, of which the crafty sometimes availed themselves. When this advantage has been taken of him by unworthy objects to obtain relief, he has laughed as heartily as any one could do when the imposition has been explained to him ; but when a designing person, by partial or false

representations of individuals, has induced him to speak or act in relation to them in a way they did not merit, no one could feel more indignant at the calumniator, or take more pains to correct the injury he might have innocently occasioned.

" Though Dr Taft received an excellent education, and for several years followed a genteel profession, and associated with the most respectable company, yet, among strangers, there was an appearance of stiffness and reserve about him. Those who have made the punctilio's of the drawing-room their study, have sometimes attributed this to ignorance of the laws of politeness, and the poor have thought him proud. Both, however, were mistaken. He had too much of christian simplicity and honesty to allow him to deal in unmeaning compliment, and few men have exceeded him in genuine humility ; but he had no taste for light and trifling topics of discourse, and at a first interview he could not impart his whole soul ; hence on such occasions he had often little to say. In the society of those, however, with whom he was acquainted, he was remarkably communicative, cheerful, and edifying. No man enjoyed the social circle more than Dr Taft, or yielded more delight to it by the animation, good sense, and piety of his conversation.

" Benevolence is a distinguishing characteristic of the christian religion. Our departed friend was established in a lucrative business at the time of his conversion, and had very flattering prospects in the line of his profession ; but pecuniary considerations weighed nothing with him when opposed to duty. At the call of God and his church he cheerfully renounced all the world could offer, and at the sacrifice of a few hundreds annually, (the difference between his income as a medical practitioner and a preacher,) he devoted himself to the work of saving souls from death. He also devoted a liberal portion of his income to charitable purposes. And although he could ill spare the time, he set apart certain mornings, when at home, to giving advice to the poor gratis. I have been present on some of these occasions, and have witnessed with delight the attention he paid to their cases; and the gratitude expressed by those who were in a hopeful way of recovery. He availed himself of these opportunities to converse with them on the momentous concerns of eternity, and thus became the physician of both body and soul.

" To a man who, like him, had been long accustomed to the comforts of a genteel establishment, it was no small trial to be much from home, to sit down to the homely fare of the cottager, and to repose sometimes not only

on a hard and thinly covered but also a damp bed. He, however, patiently and cheerfully endured the greatest privations, in prosecution of his great design to win souls to Christ ; and never was heard to complain, except when the wealthy discovered a backwardness to furnish those pecuniary supplies which the necessities of the church required.

“ Dr Taft was so constituted that he could not be half-hearted in any cause ; and when he felt the power of religion, he yielded himself up to its influence without any reserve. So impetuous a mind as his was in great danger of being led astray by the power of temptation ; but the strength of his religious principles generally kept him straight forward in the narrow path : his deviations were slight and transient, and never proceeded from any obliquity of the will. He maintained an habitual sense of the divine favour, and lived in a state of constant readiness for heaven. I have heard him express an opinion that he should die suddenly, and assign this as a special reason why he should be always prepared for a better world.

“ Our deceased friend was deeply pious. He maintained a constant reverence of God and sacred things, and was much employed in the delightful exercise of prayer. When he approached the throne of grace, he entered at once into the holy of holies ; and though a sa-

cred awe impressed his spirit, yet his manner indicated that he was no stranger there, and that he felt conscious his suit would be granted. Multitudes will remember with joy his heavenly fervor in the presence of God, and the meltings of heart they have experienced while his soul was poured out in supplication and thanksgiving.

" His ministerial abilities were very respectable. His discourses cost him much study, and were delivered in a neat nervous style, with holy warmth, accompanied with heavenly unction. His hearers were generally deeply impressed ; the mourners were cheered, believers were encouraged to enter into the glorious liberty of perfect love, and careless sinners trembled under the power of those awful truths, which he addressed to their understandings and consciences. Such a preacher could not but be eminently useful ; and he now ranks among those who have turned many to righteousness, and will shine as the stars for ever and ever."

On looking over such letters of his as have been put in my possession, and as belong to this period, there are two or three things which ought to be mentioned, though it may not be necessary to give the correspondence at length. In writing to his brother, he has frequent occasion to mention his temporal matters : in one of his letters occurs an allusion to a lovely in-

stance of Christian uprightness. Some one had bought a house from the Doctor, and the bargain turned out unexpectedly to be a disadvantageous one to the purchaser. He thereupon addresses his brother to say, that it is his wish Mr Z. Taft should send back a promisory note he had given him, by the amount of which the person was likely to be a loser. In the letters above alluded to, he mentions a remarkable circumstance: a colleague of his dreamt that his father-in-law, a man then living without God in the world, should very soon be called hence. The impression made upon his mind was so powerful that he could not shake it off. He informed his relative of the dream he had had. The old man became much concerned, and began to seek the Lord with his whole heart, and he sought him not in vain. He arranged his temporal affairs, made his will, and the next day he died. Infidels in profession and practice, treat such matters with contempt, and many professors, in their eagerness

“ To soothe the unholy throng ;” affect to deny the probability of any such impression coming from God. That the greater number of our dreams are idle illusions of the fancy, is beyond a doubt—but that they all are so, and necessarily are so, is a cowardly concession to the infidelity of the age. It were unspeakably better for christians, if they were

content to keep no terms with infidels of any shade, hue, or aspect. His letters describe the writer as growing in personal piety, and as owned of God in the ministry.

At the Conference of 1811, he was appointed to York, where he continued two years. This period was one of continued labour and usefulness, both in his medical and ministerial capacity. Nothing of a remarkable kind occurred in the history of the societies. He sustained a very painful trial in the death of his father, which took place under his roof, and was occasioned by the fracture of his leg. The limb mortified, and the aged man suffered great pain in the course of the affliction. He was often absent, but when he was recollecting, he expressed an unshaken confidence in Christ. And says Dr Taft to his friend Mr Isaac, on this occasion, "When I was at Sandyacre, attending his funeral, the friends in the neighbouring villages manifested the most unfeigned regret on account of their loss. Several of the old Methodists acknowledged that they attributed their salvation, under God, to my father, and it was evident they considered him as the spiritual father of several neighbouring societies."

I am not in possession of any thing which relates to this period, that can benefit the general reader. No record of his christian walk exists,

or has been found. The memory is often treacherous, and what it retains is for the most part, unimportant at this hour, however interesting when events were recent. What was then future, is now past, and what was doubtful, is now resolved by the event, or has ceased to be of moment. The impression of distant scenes and times, is for the most part to the actor in them himself, dim and faint, and indistinct, like the transparencies of airy waves, created by the myriads of summer insects flitting in the sun. Who can seize upon them? who can embody them into words, or convey the undefined and unfigured idea to another? The billows we have crossed, have sunk into the bosom of the deep never to swell again. The troubles we have seen we shall see no more:—They have passed away never to return.

From York, Dr Taft was removed to Newcastle upon Tyne, by the Conference of 1813, and there he remained by appointment for two years. Mr Turton, his superintendent, speaks of him as an amiable and affectionate colleague, and describes the period of their conjoint labours as one of considerable comfort and peace. Each was highly satisfied with the other. The Doctor was privileged during the first year to have Mr Barnabas Shaw, of Khamies-berg celebrity, for his inmate and fellow labourer: and

during the second, to have Mr Manwaring, between whom and himself, an affectionate correspondence, as of kindred spirits, commenced, and which death has rather interrupted than destroyed.

They did not spend their strength for nought. In one letter he says—“ We have had a glorious revival in one of our collieries, almost equal to any I have ever seen. About sixty adults, and about fifty Sunday school children have been brought in within the last two months. Many of them came to our love-feast last Sunday week, and I think I never, but once, was at a love-feast that excelled it.” He mentions in the same letter that he had recently laboured under a severe bodily affliction ; and that he was supported upon the occasion by more than human aid. “ I have been seriously indisposed for nearly three weeks, but am able to take my full work again, blessed be God. For a few days I did not know whether the Lord was not going to call me home, but he graciously delivered me from all slavish fear, and soon restored me in a great measure again.” Personal affliction was not the only trial he had to sustain. His sympathy was powerfully called forth by the affliction of his niece, which issued in death, and by the distress of his brother and sister on that occasion. His overflowing tenderness must make his letters peculiarly valuable.

ble to his relatives, but perhaps they are not all of them such as would interest the public. That written on hearing the death of this child of promise and of piety, is an exception to the remark, and is therefore appended.

" Newcastle.

" **M**Y VERY DEAR BROTHER,—Your last letter but one convinced me that the next would give an account of my dear Mary Ann's departure. I feel exquisitely on account of her loss, and yet am so convinced that our loss is her infinite gain, that on her account I rejoice. Blessed be God, we have another beloved friend and relative before the throne of our glorified Saviour; another, for whom we felt and still feel the strongest affection, has escaped every danger, and arrived among the bowing, bending, circling throng, a few days before us—who knows but she is become one of the guardian spirits that minister to our family? I feel additional encouragement to hope that every individual belonging to our two families, will meet in heaven to part no more. I have been unusually devoted to God, and proportionally dead to the world, of late, and this painful affliction will I trust, make me still more so. O my dear brother, by the grace of God, let us determine what our hand finds to do, to do it with our might. Let us do all the good we can with our money, our influence, our ministerial talents, and especially with our time. Oh! how near eternity appears to me, how short, how indescribably short and uncertain is time! Whether the Lord is about to remove me soon to my departed niece or not, I cannot tell, but I never felt such a lively conviction of the vanity of this life, and the infinite importance of religion as I do now. I feel determined by the grace of God, to live for eternity as I have never done; and I trust, my dear brother and sister are equally so de-

termined. I trust the Lord supports you both, and enables you to say, ‘Thy will be done.’ We must feel keenly, but we must feel resignedly. ‘The Lord will be with us in our affliction, to support us, to over-rule it for our good, and to deliver us in his due time. Shall be glad as soon as convenient, to receive the account of my dear departed niece, which you have promised me. Mrs Taft and my Mary unite with me in heartfelt love to you and my sister. May the Lord bless you indeed,

“Prays your ever affectionate

“H. TAFT.”

His abode in the Newcastle circuit, although he had private afflictions under which to labour, and although some trials arose out of the state of the societies, was one of considerable comfort to himself, and of much edification to others. On the whole, the churches had rest and prosperity.

In August, 1815, he was appointed by Conference to the Bingley circuit as its superintendent, with his friend Mr Manwaring as his colleague. That they entered upon this appointment with that spirit, which under God, ensures success to well-directed endeavours for promoting the interests of his church, is apparent from a letter addressed to his brother soon after his arrival in the circuit. In this communication he says—“The people are remarkably affectionate, and although the state of religion has been very low of late, we are in expectation of an immediate revival, and there are already

drops before the shower." "We have had a comfortable quarterly meeting last Monday, and after the business was over, we devoted near an hour to importunate prayer, that God would revive his work in our own souls, and through our instrumentality, in the circuit. I believe I never felt such an ardent, and at the same time, such a constant desire for the work of God to revive. I feel determined to preach a full and a present salvation every where, and to give myself to unceasing prayer, that it may not be in vain." Then follow some affectionate and respectful expressions about his colleague, which though highly honorable to the party concerned, delicacy towards him requires that they should be suppressed. In the spirit in which they entered upon the work, they persevered, and the Lord blessed their labours, owning his word spoken by them. The situation of Bingley is lovely and salubrious. The Doctor was beloved and esteemed, happy in his family and in his God, with the enjoyment of health and strength, opening prospects of usefulness, and a companion in the work as desirous as himself for its prosperity ; in short, this was one of the happiest periods of his life, the most exempt from care and suffering, and not the least useful of his itinerancy. One cloud, and only one, darkened his sky during this period. It was the removal to a better world of his sister-in-

law, Mrs Kirk, of Sunderland. This amiable young lady became the subject of consumption after her union to Mr K. No sooner did the Doctor hear of the danger with which she was threatened, than he addressed the following letter to his mother-in-law, Mrs White :—

“ DEAR MOTHER,—I feel very much concerned at the account you give us of our sister Kirk’s illness, and especially on account of her cough and night sweats, and cannot help fearing there is some degree of danger lest her present complaint should terminate in consumption. I wish when you write again, that you would ask Dr Fearon to give you his opinion of her state. It would be a great relief to our minds to hear that he thought her free from danger. If she does not recover soon I think we shall come and see her.

“ I feel very solicitous that this affliction may be sanctified. It is a loud call from God to devote herself to his service—*perhaps it may not be removed unless the end is answered.* I have no doubt we might sometimes shorten our afflictions by humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. O how glad shall I be if my dear sister does but immediately begin to seek the Lord with purpose of heart. We shall continually pray for her. Give my most heart-felt love to her, and entreat her immediately and unreservedly to dedicate herself to the service of Him that bought her with his blood. We cannot get to heaven unless we are truly converted. Advise her to read a few pages of Fletcher’s Address to earnest Seekers of Salvation, as she may be able; do write soon. Give my love to every one of the family as if named. Ever your’s,

H. TAFT.”

It is a pleasure to add, that Mrs K. before her departure, was enabled to witness a good

confession to the power of divine grace, and that she died in the assurance of a better resurrection.

He remained for two years in Bingley, and in the minutes of 1817, we find him appointed to Birstall, along with a former colleague, Mr Sargeant. He was not a person given to unmanly complainings, but his correspondence from Birstall shews that he entered upon the work under very discouraging circumstances. The congregations had greatly declined: the societies were thinned by desertions, and of course the people must have been less or more dispirited. One of his children became the subject of severe and long continued affliction, and of a kind which threatened her life. All these circumstances, sufficiently painful in themselves, were rendered doubly so, by the near recollections of the comforts he had enjoyed and left behind him at Bingley. Thus it pleased God in the order of his Providence, to conduct him out of the green pastures, and from beside the still waters, into the valley of the shadow of death. But the Lord did not forsake him there. He continued a faithful labourer, sowing beside all waters, and trusting to him who giveth the increase, that the seed, though for a time buried and out of sight, should grow up, he knew not how. Doubtless his mind received considerable profit from the exercises through which he had

to pass, and it is a matter of regret that he has not left the materials for stating the manner or degree in which God sanctified his afflictions to him. Though he was exercised with family affliction, and discouraged by the then drooping state of the churches in this circuit, he had nothing of which to complain in the people themselves. They were every thing that was affectionate and friendly. It was to their regret, and, but for the occasion of his removing (the afflicted state of his family), it would have been to his regret, that he parted with them at the end of one year's acquaintance and fellowship of charity.

From Birstal Dr Taft removed to Manchester. He was appointed to Salford with his greatly honored friend, Mr Bramwell. The sudden and lamented death of that excellent man prevented the accomplishment of his hopes and wishes, in having, once more, the happiness of labouring with one he loved so well. The circumstances in so far as personal feeling were concerned, under which he went to the circuit, were of a very painful nature. Nor did these constitute the only trial of this appointment. He had to experience an unusually large share of family affliction during this period. Both Mrs T. and the children were frequently and severely indisposed; and to one of his affectionate and apprehensive temper, these dispen-

sations of Providence must have been deeply painful. At one time, he expresses very serious fears to his brother, that he should lose three out of four of his children. His fears, however, proved to be unfounded ; the Lord restored them all to health, not however, till a long continued period of affliction had been passed through. From as many members of the society and congregation as he had opportunity to be personally and intimately acquainted with, he received every mark of affectionate attention. His warm affection, his ingenuous openness, his child-like candor, made him generally beloved, where he had the advantage of being fully known. The kindness he experienced he sincerely felt, and never thought his obligations grew less by distance of time or place.

The society, at the period of his appointment, and during the whole of his abode among them, was in a situation peculiarly trying. By the good hand of God upon us as a nation and a people, the political disturbances which agitated and alarmed the peaceable and the timid among us in the years 1819 and 1820, have so completely died away, that already they are almost forgotten. For months and perhaps years before the disaffection grew ripe for revolt, and the Agrarian law of an universal partition of property was proposed, discontent had been fostered by the ceaseless murmurs of many perio-

dical writers. The decay of trade in many of its branches, at the close of the war, with the consequent scarcity of employment and diminished rate of wages, disposed many to entertain the complainings which represented the causes of distress to exist in the misconduct of the ministry, and the unfeeling apathy of the wealthy and the great.

Jealousy is the rage of a man ; no integrity is proof against its suspicions. The manliness and openness of candor, is an impudent avowal of what is wrong ; the reserve and silence of a man whose convictions are not to be shaken and cannot be communicated, are interpreted into symptoms of conscious guilt. All this and more was illustrated by the conduct of the unhappy mal-contents. When the wealthier part of the community offered employment to the poor, it was said to be a purchase of forbearance ; when they armed themselves for resistance, it was a resolute purpose to enforce the wrong.

Manchester suffered greatly from the decay of trade, and multitudes imbibed sentiments of disaffection. Several members left our society ; and if any thing was wanting to convince Dr Taft of the dangerous nature of radical politics, it was furnished in the fact, that few, if any, imbibed the prevailing sentiments without making shipwreck of faith and a good con-

science. This determined him to warn and caution as many as his influence could reach, to stand apart from those who feared not to speak evil of dignities. Several of his letters written on this occasion do him honor as a man, a christian, and a christian minister. It could answer no good purpose at this distance of time, and in the present state of things, to record at length observations, however judicious, and at the time, however needed, that are not now called for; yet an extract or two from his letters of that date are not out of place.

“ I feel no fear of a revolution, although I am apprehensive of partial insurrections, especially in this neighbourhood. But bad as we are, there is, I hope, too much good among us, for God to give us up to all the horrors of a civil war. Infidelity has certainly spread most awfully among the irreligious and backsliders in this neighbourhood; and who need wonder at those who have long been trampling on truths which they have believed, and at which they have trembled, flying to infidelity that they might get rid of convictions, to which they were determined not to submit? We have just instituted a society to distribute religious tracts, and especially such as are calculated to stem the torrent of infidelity. We have sent for about twenty thousand already, and are actively distributing them. Never were we called upon to

make such exertions, I am ready to think, as at the present moment. I have begun of late to visit our people from house to house, both in town and country, to give them pastoral advice, pray with them, and leave two or three tracts with each family, and I never felt more sensible of the approving smile of the Lord, than while engaged in this work and labour of love."

"He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely." On this trying occasion, he acted a conscientious part, and he enjoyed the testimony of his own conscience. And what was truly encouraging, he had the pleasure of seeing good done in the name of the holy child Jesus. It is a wonder of constant occurrence that the seed cast into the ground, though in its growth it has to encounter chilling blasts, and every variety of unfavourable and unfriendly weather, grows up into the abundance of harvest. And it is more than a matter of equal wonder that the seed of divine grace should strike root downward, and bear fruit upward, amidst a thousand storms and discouragements. While the storm seemed gathering to break on our guilty land, much good was doing, and the soil was preparing for the many years of plenty which have followed. In one letter he says,— "Last Sunday I preached twice, and held the love-feast at Salford, and it was indeed a most glorious day. In the morning I preached

from Mark 12 c. 30, 31 v. and it was a most heart-searching, soul-refreshing season. The love-feast was a season of uncommon power. Most of those who spoke were filled with God. My soul felt unutterable things. Before concluding, I requested any who were truly penitent, to get up and tell us, that we might pray for them. One woman in the right hand gallery, another in the left, and a backslider below, cried out for mercy, and were in a very few minutes set at liberty. The shaking among the dry bones became general. Numbers were under conviction—numbers instantly filled with joy unutterable. I dismissed the meeting, but requested the penitents to stop, and nine more were set at liberty."

During this period it is apparent from his private letters, that his soul prospered, and was in health. In the absence of a diary, written exclusively for private perusal, nothing may be supposed to express more fully the most undisguised sentiments and feelings of the heart than a man's letters addressed to the wife of his bosom. From one of these I select the following passage, not because it contains any thing original in sentiment, or tasteful in expression, but because it is a proof he was in private what he professed to be in public; and to his most intimate friend he was wont thus to unbosom himself.

" We had an interesting meeting, and some good speaking at the Bible society anniversary. I felt pleased to see so many lovers of the Bible assembled together, and felt a secret hope that I should spend a happy eternity with the greater part, if not with all of them. My soul exults in the exertions making by the church of Christ to hasten the coming of his millenial reign upon earth. I can indeed heartily pray for, and sincerely rejoice in the prosperity of every denomination of true christians, and would much rather be a hewer of wood, or drawer of water, for the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness. O my dear love, let us take care while passing through the things which are temporal, that we do not lose sight of those which are eternal ! I do feel a ceaseless spirit of prayer, and praise ; the Lord grant it may continue !"

" Let another praise thee," said the wise man, " and not thy own lips"—it is gratifying to derive testimonies of his worth from those best fitted and best circumstanced to form a correct estimate of his character.

For the remarks which I am now to introduce, I am indebted to the pen of Mr Atherton, who was Dr T.'s colleague at Manchester. The reader will discern a great similarity between this communication, and that from Mr Isaac, on the same subject. The similarity

consists in the sentiments, and not in the language, and is evidently such as might have been expected in the productions of two accurate and intelligent observers of the same character. Because a man differs so much from himself at different periods of his life, (and the periods of the Doctor's intimacy with these ministers were considerably removed, the one from the other,) and because in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established, it is to me a gratifying circumstance, that I can add to the character drawn of Dr T. by Mr Isaac, the corroborating testimony of Mr Atherton, and the more especially as the one was furnished without a knowledge of the other.

" I should feel great pleasure in recording my humble testimony to the worth of our departed friend, Dr Taft ; and should have been equally ready to have given a sketch of his character as it appeared to me, both from a near and a distant view, provided I had found myself competent to the task. The Doctor was a person whom but few thoroughly knew, of whom many misconceived, and of whom different opinions will be formed. He often appeared to so great a disadvantage, that to analyse his character, to present in a separate state each constituent which entered into its composition, to ascertain the nature, and determine the real value of each, is necessary to do him justice ; but this must be left to other hands.

" As human nature is deeply mysterious, so human character in general is strangely mixed. The darkest in the picture of worth have often some softening relieving excellence, and the brightest some dimming spot, which tarnishes their lustre; so that light and shade are as necessary to justice in the delineation of human character, as they are in painting, in order to be true to nature. From a long and intimate knowledge of Dr. Taft, I feel no hesitation in saying, that I never met with a person who improved more on acquaintance, who better bore to be thoroughly known, than himself; the least prepossessing parts of his character lay bare on the surface, while in his heart were concealed mines of sterling worth, which intercourse brought to light, and opportunity called into useful display. He had his shades as well as his brightnesses; but his shades were not *stains*; and these were occasioned by the beclouding influence of a hasty judgement, while his brightnesses were the reflections of the mirror of his heart.

" Of those things, for which he was peculiar, and by which he was in some degree distinguished from the generality of gracious persons, great *simplicity* of heart may be marked as one. There was no double mindedness in himself, nor the shadow of a suspicion that there was anything of the kind in others. So in his opi-

nions, friendships, and conversation. In his intercourse with the world and the church, he was truly *sincere*. He knew nothing of secrets or concealments; for he thought aloud. He was a stranger to all disguise, carrying his openness of mind even to a fault. He not only spoke the truth, but on every occasion *all* the truth, even when the whole truth was not called for by the circumstances of the case; and never assigned an ostensible reason for any action for the purpose of concealing the real one.

“ But to this innocence of the dove he did not always join the wisdom of the serpent. As he judged of the sincerity of others by the uprightness of his own heart, so he believed, without question or suspicion, all things which appeared to him to come from good authority; and as he freely communicated as truth what he had freely received as such, he was often found to be in error. On every subject, whether indifferent or momentous, and in every conversation, light or sedate, he was always *serious*. Though naturally cheerful, and abounding in good nature to excess, he deemed every matter of so much importance as never to trifle with it, and treated no subject with unbecoming levity. He was not without his feelings both for himself and others, and these feelings were on some occasions exquisite, if not agonizing for the moment, and that where more

philosophic minds would scarcely have felt a touch ; but if whatever is severe is short, so it was in the experience of the Doctor,—for if sorrow on any account continued for a night, his usual equanimity of mind returned with the morning.

“ To this disposition of soul, combined with uncommon kindness of heart, may be attributed another distinguishing trait,—a *readiness to forgive injuries*, and an apparent total forgetfulness of any hard or unkind treatment with which he had met, either from unreasonable men, or from others from whom he could least have expected such unfriendly dealings ; for though he some times had reason to fear the resentment of others, it found no admission into his breast, and he seemed to have quite forgotten the offences of others when the most tempting opportunities occurred for inflicting, as some would think it, a justifiable retaliation.

“ His numerous calls to visit the sick in a professional capacity as a medical man,—his regular voluntary attention to the poor and afflicted part of his own flock, to whom his visits were trebly acceptable, as he imparted his medical advice, communicated christian consolation, and afforded pecuniary aid at the same time, and these with an equally generous heart and liberal hand,—his attention to the societies in general,—his having almost perpetually in hand some

work of faith, some labour of love, in raising contributions either for deeply necessitous individuals, or for the support of some important charity, and into which his whole soul entered,—these rendered his life a drudgery of labour, put him into a constant hurry, and, 'tis very probable, contributed in no small degree to enfeeble his constitution, and ultimately to shorten his days.

" Nor was he, amid these multifarious engagements, wanting in attention to his public duties. He kept to his appointments. For although subject to absence of mind, his recollection seldom failed in what respected his duty. He was always at his post, to do the work, or to see that it was done.

" He was tremblingly alive to the prosperity of religion in general, the honor and progress of Methodism in particular; and restlessly anxious especially for the temporal comfort and respectability, and the spiritual improvement of the circuits in which he laboured; and some of those in which he has been stationed, have derived considerable advantage from his exertions. His feelings on these points were morbidly sensitive; so much so, that the least appearance of danger, the breath of a suspicion of the existence of any thing which might be injurious to that good cause which lay so near his heart, seized his imagination, raised his alarms,

and occasioned in his feelings and conduct, whatever appeared in him most objectionable. So that his greatest failings leaned to virtue's side.

" He was a most indefatigable, importunate, and successful pleader of the cause of charity, especially in the way of private personal application. He had indeed an advantage here, which every one who is called to tread the same path does not possess ; he not only allured by his solicitations, but could lead the way by his own example. He not only felt the cause in a truly charitable heart, but he had a purse of his own, and no one had a more ready mind to draw it, and having become himself the first contributor, he could, with the greater confidence, urge the assistance of others ; and as he was never weary, nor faint, nor desponding, so whatever he put his hand to of this nature prospered, and in a degree almost equal to his own wishes, and beyond the expecations of his most sanguine friends. In his death the church has lost an important member, the cause of benevolence a distinguished advocate, and a chasm is left in this department of usefulness, which will not soon be so adequately filled.

" As a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was zealous, faithful, and in ministerial ability respectable. His sermons were short, but substantial ; composed with care, arranged with clear-

ness, and clothed in language pure and dignified, always natural, and sometimes tasteful, but on every occasion delivered with an earnestness which bespoke the sincerity of his own convictions. He never offered to the Lord or to his people, that which had cost him nothing, but availed himself as well of what he had heard as of what he had read and thought, to enrich his subjects ; and which were delivered with warmth and weight, earnestness and solemnity, and often with the best effect. There were few preachers, however, who could less depend on previous preparation, or were more dependent on the feelings and assistances of the moment than he was. When saved from his constitutional timidity, and raised above his fears, through a confidence in divine aid, or a consciousness of his Master's presence at those seasons, Dr Taft was no common preacher.

“ In Dr Taft, there was more that was amiable in mind, than admirable in character ; more to approve than to commend ; and we were often compelled to love the man, where we should be least disposed to recommend him as a model.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Conference of 1821, held its sittings at Manchester, and towards the close of its proceedings, Dr Taft's appointment was determined for Birmingham; and thither he removed his family in due time. He was affectionately received by the friends in that place, and ere long they became mutually pleased with each other, without a suspicion on either side, that this was to be the parting scene of his ministerial labour.

The cause of Methodism in Birmingham has never been so prosperous as in many other parts of the united kingdom. Had it prospered in the manner its best friends have wished, and prayed, and laboured, that it might, this town, from its central situation, would have been chosen for one of the places of Conference. One of the greatest obstructions to our increase there, existed in the very limited accommodation furnished by our chapels to the congregation. This evil had long been complained of, and as often a remedy had been contemplated. The central chapel, and mother church of our communion, was so surrounded by other buildings, that it seemed a hopeless undertaking

to attempt enlarging it. The other chapels are so much in the suburbs, that the public convenience could not be effectually answered by enlarging them; and to build a fourth chapel would have incurred the necessity of a fourth preacher to the appointment; a doubtful measure, as it was thought, for the interests of the society, whose funds were hardly equal to the increased expence which must thereby be incurred. That something should be done was more than desirable, it was necessary ; but every plan that occurred was encumbered with difficulties of a very serious character. The vast population of the town made it the duty of every body of christians to provide the means of hearing the word of life, not merely for themselves, but each after their ability, for the multitudes who are living without God in the world. It is a melancholy fact, when one reflects on the ingenuity and endless contrivance of the cunning artificers of this town, that the lawless part of the community exhibit no less talent and dexterity in invading another's property, than the sober and industrious in creating articles of use and luxury. Not fewer than 70 persons belonging to Birmingham, and for crimes committed there, it is said, at a single assize, have been transported beyond seas, on conviction. The Doctor felt deeply for the awful condition of thousands who were living around him in the neglect of every thing

sacred—he laboured to do good, and his labours in the pulpit, and in private, were crowned with success, but still he grieved to think that so few could be furnished with sittings in our places of worship, and that some of our own society were obliged to look elsewhere for a pew in which to accommodate their families. At length the friends came to the resolution of purchasing the adjoining premises of the Cherry Street Chapel, and as the expence of obtaining this property, and of effecting the purposed enlargement, was foreseen to be considerable, they resolved, without delay, to enter into regular and periodical contributions to a fund to be created for the occasion. The liberal subscriptions of many will be remembered, when this world, with its works, shall be burnt up. The amount of contributions was not less than £1600, a sum very considerable when regarded as a whole, but more remarkable still, when the circumstances of many of the donors are taken into the account. The Lord reward them according to their works.

During the first year of his appointment to Birmingham, the principal event in the external history of the church among us, was, the preparation for building or enlarging the chapel. As it respects the internal history of our societies, they had rest; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy

Ghost, they prospered. The sheep went in and out and found pasture. The public and private means of grace were owned and blessed of God to the edification of the people. The missionary meetings of the town and neighbouring places in the district, were seasons, not merely of religious excitement, but also of much profit. The Doctor took an active part in the duties of the occasion, and (according to the opinion of one neither slenderly gifted with the faculty of "moving men's minds," nor in any respect wanting in powers of discrimination) he was able to take an effective part in the business of missionary meetings. The last time, says that gentleman, I heard Dr Taft speak in public, was at a missionary meeting, and to my feelings, he then delivered the very best harangue that I ever heard on such an occasion. There were happy moments in the experience of the Doctor, when he escaped entirely from the shackles of fear, and feeling himself unrestrained, and at perfect liberty, his speech and his thoughts flowed along in an easy and forcible current. Inductive reasoning was not his forte, but he often attained to a strain of pure and vehement declamation, which it was delightful to hear. This expression is so often misapplied to rhapsody, altogether innocent of meaning, and unburthened with thought, that we almost lose sight

of the species of eloquence which it describes. At a missionary meeting the audience are supposed to be pretty generally convinced of the propriety and importance of the object of the institution which they are assembled to assist; but it requires little knowledge of the world, and less of oneself to know, that more is necessary in the way of rousing us to the performance of duties whose obligation is acknowledged, than merely to inform us of duties which are binding upon us.

While Dr T. was ardently engaged in doing good to others, he was not negligent in seeking it for himself—nor was he unsuccessful. He had given his heart unto the Lord, and the Lord blessed his inheritance.

The Conference of 1822 renewed his appointment to Birmingham, along with those of Mr Riles and Mr Bicknell. It was not until this period that the writer had the opportunity of observing near at hand the life and character of Dr Taft. This advantage he derived from being occasionally an inmate in his house; and nothing presented itself more forcibly as among the distinguishing features of his moral profile, than the simplicity and earnestness of his devotional exercises; engaged with God at a throne of grace, he lost sight of every thing less than the important occasion of his approach to the Father. His was a child-like unhesitating con-

fidence, which confessed and pleaded, without a doubt of being heard and answered. And yet there was a reverent awe; there was a veneration of his Maker, which removed his supplications far enough from unhallowed familiarity, and from the "knowing Christ after the flesh." There never seemed with him any thing like sinking into formality in family worship: no repetition of the service made it tame to him. There was a fire in his bosom which went not out day nor night for ever.

In his ordinary conversation there was an openness of communication which invited confidence, and was sure to gain it. He told you all he thought, and wished, and felt, with an unreserve altogether peculiar to himself, and which would be hardly safe for another. All this was in a measure the effect of an exuberance of natural spirits: it was also, in a much higher degree, the result of conscious integrity, of upright purpose, and pure intention. And he was a living example how little after all a man suffers by dealing openly with every man. His zeal for God and his love to man were with him ceaseless spurs to duty; whatever he undertook he did it with all his might; and in how great a degree he lived and laboured for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock, is too well known and too deeply felt to need mention. He was careful to entertain strangers,

and was unwearied in his attentions, and in those little kindnesses which serve to sweeten life, though they do not admit of formal description and enumeration.

In the spring of 1823, the writer was united in marriage to the eldest daughter of Dr Taft, and on that occasion he had the happiness for a few weeks of daily intercourse with the subject of this memoir. The result of his observations was a conviction that the talents of Dr T. were but imperfectly appreciated by his brethren in general, and that many of the excellencies of his character, which lay beneath the surface, often escaped observation, while a few things which he had been better without, were open to every eye. On the subject of this last allusion, I cannot better explain myself than in the language used by Mr Bicknell on a mournful occasion, of which more must by and bye be said. "I think it very probable that some may now be disposed to ask, what were the faults and defects of the deceased? I answer, that whatever they were, they will not be particularized by me in this place, any farther than to give me the opportunity of declaring my conscientious belief, that they were few and trivial, in comparison of his many and great excellencies, and that they were such as were perfectly compatible with the character of a sincere and ardent lover of God and man. There was on some

occasions an *eagerness* in his manner of doing things, and of striving to carry his purposes, which, to some persons, was not pleasant ; but as far as the state of a man's heart is to be judged of by the general tempers and actions of his life, I do not hesitate to avow my conviction, that such eagerness was far enough removed from every thing radically wrong or sinful ; it was the exuberance, the overflowing of that affectionate warmth (not an angry warmth) but that affectionate warmth, which was the very element in which his soul lived."

Among the excellencies of his character was a complete superiority to the little and debasing feelings of jealousy. A man less respected than himself would not have had the same temptations to jealousy. He would have had less credit at stake, and having never enjoyed the honor that cometh from man, the want of it had been as little felt, as that of eyesight to a man born blind. A person possessed of splendid talents is more likely to create, than to entertain jealousy. But the Doctor was of that generous nature, which in the sight of talent, and especially of talent devoted to the altar, foregoes every selfish consideration in the thought of the glory that may redound to God, and the good that may accrue to man. It was beautifully said of one who was the favorite of his neighbourhood—he has just that

measure of intellect which wakens complacency without provoking jealousy. But Dr T.'s was an higher measure—his mind was possessed of enviable faculties, but he had that grace which purifies the heart by faith, and he was a stranger to the temper

“ Which hates the excellence it cannot reach.”

His letters, and the testimony of surviving friends, prove him to have been a most affectionate relative, and already we have hinted that he was every thing that could be wished as a son, a husband, and a brother. That he had all a father's heart, ought also to be mentioned. Very soon after his daughter's marriage, he addressed a fatherly epistle to her and her husband, in which he unbosomed his whole heart, suggesting whatever in their mutual intercourse, and in the conduct of their affairs, might contribute to their happiness. And thus he closes his kind advices—“ Above every thing else, live near to God—let holiness and usefulness be your first objects. Be assured your present and everlasting happiness lies unspeakably near my heart.” These were not mere words, they were the embodied feelings of his inmost soul—and what he was in word, such also he was in deed—he left nothing undone that, in his opinion, might be for his offspring's benefit, when he should be taken from them.

In the summer of 1823, the Doctor had to pass through a great deal of family affliction. Mrs T. was so much indisposed, that he began to entertain the most serious apprehensions on her account. One of the children also became the subject of a long continued and very distressing complaint. Nor was this all; he was himself suddenly seized with an attack, not improbably in a lighter degree of that very disease which afterwards proved fatal to him; but by a kind providence, though painful and alarming for the period of its continuance, it soon disappeared, and left him to appearance in as sound health as before. For a number of years he had supposed himself to labour under disease of the heart. The symptoms from which he was led to form this opinion, were, however, obscure and equivocal, and though he occasionally had fears upon the subject, there was nothing to confirm them, in the general state of his health and feelings.

His family, though far from being well, were so far recovered as to allow his attendance at the Sheffield Conference—and it is pleasing to gather from a letter to Mrs T. that though the occasion was rendered a very solemn one by the sudden death of the brethren thrown from the roof of a coach as they were on the road to the Conference, and though his mind was exercised with much and tender solicitude for his chil-

dren then indisposed, it was a peculiarly gratifying season to him. His words are, "I hesitate not to say, that this has been the best Conference I ever attended. Dr Clarke gave an address to the preachers taken into full connection, which affected every preacher in Conference, and every hearer in the chapel—and most of them to tears. The effect of that address will not, I hope, soon cease."

On this occasion he received his last appointment, and was for a third year stationed to Birmingham under the superintendancy of Mr Entwistle, and with his former colleague, Mr Bicknell. The object he had had so much at heart, as a mean to a higher end, the re-building Cherry Street Chapel on a larger scale, was now pretty far proceeded in. Before Conference, the adjoining premises were purchased, the old structure taken down, and the new erection, capable of holding 500 more hearers than the old one, was nearly finished. At length the Doctor had the gratification to witness the dedication of the building to the worship of Almighty God, the services of the occasion being conducted by Messrs Watson, Bunting, and Newton. About the same time, he was gratified with the restoration to health of his little daughter, who had so long and so seriously been afflicted.

In December he was afflicted with consider-

able pain in respiration, and with remarkable irregularity of pulse. The distress he endured was of short continuance, and did not engage his serious notice. Throughout the whole of this month he continued to preach, meet classes, visit the society, and attend the sick, without any personal inconvenience ; and, if any state of health or vigour of constitution—to appearance at least—could justify a man in counting upon years of usefulness yet to come, he might, considering his time of life, have been that man. He was, as a clergyman of his acquaintance observed, to look upon, a tower of strength.

At the close of the year his family circle was enlarged by the return, on a visit, of his eldest daughter to his house. A change of air, and a removal to a somewhat warmer latitude, had been suggested as promising to be useful to her health, and this removal, sufficiently painful in itself, was over-ruled by a gracious providence for good. Besides that she derived the benefit that was hoped from this change—it gave him an opportunity of saying, my children are about me, and of blessing them, before he died. In January, 1824, the writer of this memoir received two letters from him, dated the 2d and 17th, respectively, but so far from containing the least hint of personal indisposition, they contain nothing but some pleasing accounts of

Mrs McAllum's improved health, and some affectionate wishes that we might be stationed together by the *ensuing Conference*. Little indeed, did my honored friend suppose that we should not meet till the day of God—little did he suspect that our personal intercourse in time was over.—“ Oh blindness to the future! kindly given.”

On Thursday the 22d, he preached in Cherry-street chapel, and what was very remarkable, his text on the occasion, was the supplication of Moses,—“ I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” He was much at liberty, and spoke at length on the promises concerning the glory that shall be revealed, and knew not, that he was about to realize all that of which he spoke, and more than as yet he could conceive. At the distance of only a fortnight from that service, his body was interred at the foot of the very pulpit from which he now addressed his audience.

On the Saturday, he cheerfully observed to the family, that his last wish concerning Cherry-street Chapel was now accomplished, and explained himself to refer to some writings connected with the building, which were now executed and settled. On Sunday morning the 25th, according to appointment, he walked to West Bromwich, about four miles distant from Birmingham, preached twice to the congregation there, and after the evening service re-

turned home on foot. He was then in good health, and sustained the fatigue without inconvenience or much exhaustion. One of our local preachers accompanied him in that evening's walk, and remarked that his conversation bespoke a more than usual concern for the prosperity of religion, and the salvation of souls. On Monday morning he was employed, as his custom was, in receiving persons who came to him for medical advice, and in the latter part of the day visited some members of the society ; and he was observed by one family, to be in his usual cheerful mood. While there seemed, however, to be nothing in his personal appearance to indicate or threaten a sudden removal, God was evidently ripening his soul for a better world. His conversation was in a peculiar manner seasoned with grace ; there was observable in his words, a depth as well as a liveliness of gracious feeling ; there was, in a word, what has been beautifully denominated, a mellowness of spiritual grace, often found among christians about the period of their being taken home to God.

On Tuesday morning, after breakfast, he went into his garden and spent some time in digging. The atmosphere was cloudy, and the ground was damp. The exercise soon brought him to a state of perspiration ; in which state the cold and damp air suddenly obstructing it, he felt

himself seized with what was in fact, neither more nor less than an inflammation of the bowels. He felt lassitude and pain, but strange to think, did not suspect what was the real cause of his disorder. He left the garden, was variously employed throughout the day, and lay on a sofa for an hour late in the afternoon. From the recumbent and easy posture he felt some relief, and wholly unsuspicous of the gathering disorder, he went as far as Essex-street, and according to appointment, preached in a room there. His text was,—“ But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” 1 Timothy, 4 c. 8 v. He was unusually animated in his address, and affectionate in his manner. But warmth and affection were congenial to him. He returned home on foot, and seemed to be greatly exhausted by the exercise he had undergone.

Early the next morning he found himself greatly indisposed, and Mr Harris the surgeon, who usually attended the family, was sent for. He found the Doctor labouring under considerable pain in the region of the intestines, but the state of the pulse was not such as to create any alarm.

All his friends about him noticed with pleasure that a little medicine which he took at Mr Harris's suggestion, was productive of great

ease, and during the following night he had some refreshing rest.

As no suspicion existed in the minds of the family that his case was a dangerous one, much less that his end was near, even at the door, little notice was taking of any thing he said. Indeed his complaint was of a kind—incipient inflammation of the bowels,—to render speaking painful to him. He expressed some fear himself, but as he in general enjoyed remarkably good health, and as when at any time indisposed, his ready fears at once took the alarm, his apprehensions did not prove contagious to any great extent. His affectionate wife and daughter hoped to see him on the Thursday as well as he had been at the beginning of the week. On the morning of that day, however, his complaint wore an alarming appearance, and assumed a decisive character, but by no means such an aspect as to convince the relatives that the bitterness of separation was about to be realized. I shall here quote Mr Bicknell's words, from a brief account of his last sickness, read at the delivery of the funeral sermon. "In consequence of the suffering he underwent, he could say but little; whenever he spoke of the state of his mind, his expressions were invariably those of resignation to God, and confidence in him. When I was with him on the forenoon of Thursday, he said to me, 'I dont know but God

is going to remove me ; several of our preachers have been taken away by inflammatory affections ; I never had such an illness as this since I was born ; but I have no doubt of my acceptance with God ; I have a worse opinion of death-bed repentances now than I ever had ; for I am sure that no man, in the agony I have undergone this morning, could properly attend to such a business.' All this was spoken in a very rapid manner, and in short detached sentences, as was the case with most of what he said during his illness, owing, I suppose, to the pain which he endured, and his difficulty of breathing, which prevented him from delivering much at once. At this time he thought himself a little better, and after praying with him, I left."

This forenoon Mr Harris abstracted fourteen ounces of blood from the arm, by which operation he obtained some relief, but by no means so much as had been calculated upon. Dr Johnson was immediately called in, and then the patient complained of great pain upon the slightest motion, the pain having extended over nearly the whole trunk. A preparation of antimony was prescribed, and a profuse perspiration followed its exhibition. At 1 P. M. he was much relieved, and when the head was considerably elevated, and all motion was carefully abstained from, no distress was felt, but great

anxiety was pourtrayed in the countenance, and an excessive debility now came on.

In this state he continued till the evening, at ease when motionless, but with difficult and hurried respiration, and complaining of torture on the slightest movement. His constitutional impatience, it was remarked, seemed entirely subdued, as if “the fire his graces had refined”—there was nothing of fretfulness in his manner, no struggling of spirit against Him in whose hands are the appointments of life and death. On the contrary, his composure on this trying occasion, when for the last time the gold was put in the refiner’s fire, was strikingly contrasted with the manner that was usual to him in the period of his health and strength. The family were now seriously alarmed for the issue of this affliction—the fear spread beyond the household to the whole circle of the Doctor’s acquaintance, and till now it was not known how many, how very many, felt an interest in his recovery. The sick he had visited, and under God restored; numbers whose counsellor in perplexity, and sympathising friend in the day of distress, he had proved himself; and not a few of those who had sat under his ministry with profit and delight; persons in all these ways connected with him were roused to a deep anxiety on his behalf. Many a prayer was offered on his behalf, and it was fondly

hoped that he should be restored to his family and the church. The physician in attendance encouraged these hopes, and as yet not one of his relatives at a distance was apprised of his danger.

Mrs McAllum sat up with her father that night, Mrs Taft having been obliged to retire to rest. The situation in which she was, and the fatigue she had undergone, having rendered repose necessary for her.

All night the Doctor was restless and sleepless. He was hot and cold by turns ; ceaselessly he thrust his hands above the bed clothes, and then wished them covered from the cold. He slumbered, but could not take rest by sleep. The constipation continued altogether unrelieved ; a symptom of itself the most alarming that could occur in such a case. In the forenoon the pain had abated, but without relief to the respiration, or mitigation of any of the distressing symptoms under which he had laboured. "On Friday forenoon we were encouraged," says Mr Bicknell, "to hope that he was better ; but though his pain had somewhat abated, his strength was greatly reduced, and he was certainly sinking under the power of disease. I believe this was his own opinion of his case ; he told me, he thought there was just a possibility of his recovery, but that was all, and said, although he did not suffer quite so much as on the

preceding day, he *had lost a day's strength.* Even at this time he was free from pain only as long as he could keep himself exactly in one position, for the least movement produced such exquisite suffering as constrained him to cry out. His changes for the worse were extremely rapid, for it was only about an hour before this, that he told Mr Entwistle, he did not think this sickness would be unto death; and whatever apprehensions his friends might at times have respecting him, no one of us thought that in twelve hours from this time, he would be in another world."

"Through the afternoon and evening he continued getting worse, but there was no variation in the state of his mind: his heart had long been upright before the Lord his God; and enjoying the testimony of his Holy Spirit, that he was a son of God, and an heir of heaven, the approach of dissolution, sudden as it was, was to him no source either of terror or of grief. A little before nine o'clock, it became evident that his end was much nearer than we had hitherto suspected. Mr Harris asked him if he was quite happy—if his confidence in God was strong? he said his confidence in God was strong, though he desired a still brighter manifestation of the divine goodness; Mr H. prayed particularly for *this*, and his prayer was answered, as the Doctor said afterwards, he was *quite happy.*"

His sufferings were of so overwhelming a kind, that he was never composed enough to make enquiry for any of the family not in the room. One of the children on going up stairs to rest, slipped into his room and walked up to his bed. His eye fell upon his child, but it was with an objectless gaze, unmoved, or not to be roused by the presence of any. "Between 11 and 12 o'clock, after some other remarks had passed between us," says Mr B. "I said to him, Doctor, we are sorry to lose you; you are going before us, but I hope we shall all meet you above. Why, said he, I have felt a *resigned wish to live*, if it had pleased God, for the sake of my family, and the church, and the world, but I leave myself altogether to God, for he knows what is best. I feel great cause for humiliation, but I have *no doubt, no fear*, I am quite happy. He then reached out his hand very affectionately to me, saying, bless you; give my dying love to Mr Entwistle; and my dying love to *all* friends. I then prayed with him, commanding his spirit to God; and asking for him every needful support in his last moments; he joined fervently in every petition. This was within a *quarter of an hour* of his end, and may be considered as his dying testimony to the power and comfort of divine grace, as he spoke nothing afterwards of the state of his mind."

" Mrs Taft now came up to his bed-side, and he had a short conversation with her, after which it was perceived that he was engaged in prayer, and presently his spirit took its flight to the bosom of his Redeemer. He was in the 53d year of his age, and the 21st of his itinerant ministry."

Thus lived and thus died Dr Henry Taft, whose life had once been according to the course of this world, but for more than half its duration had been fully dedicated to the service of his God. And that God whom he served continually did not abandon him in his affliction and death. It was not one of triumph, and this is not to be wondered at; for the extensive inflammation having issued in a mortification probably equally extensive, brought with it such a sinking of strength as rendered it a matter of difficulty for him to utter a single sentence. Till within three hours of his decease it was not imagined that he was near death. Happily for him he had not left the great business of working out his salvation with fear and trembling, to the season of a sick bed and a dying hour; and the little he was able to utter was just such as from his whole life and conversation might have been expected from him. He rests from his labours and his works do follow him.

The eagerness of the public to obtain any information concerning the deceased was unusual.

ly great, and application being made to the writer, from one of the public prints, for an article of the kind, the following was sent, which it may not be out of place to transcribe here.

" In our last paper we mentioned the sudden decease of the Rev. Dr Taft. On Friday last the funeral was solemnized, and for a reason which we shall immediately mention, the interment took place in a vault dug in the middle aisle of the new Methodist Chapel, Cherry-street. The Doctor, as we have understood, was remarkably active and successful in forwarding the arrangements and procuring subscriptions for its erection, and the Trustees resolved its area should be his tomb, and its superstructure his monument. The family, it is said, wished to have had the funeral conducted in a very private manner, but the deceased was the object of so much affection and respect, that many pressed to take a part in the solemn ceremony. The Trustees of the Chapel walked first, and were followed by a mourning coach, containing the medical attendants, and ministers, who conducted the service of the day, and by another, in which were six ministers, pall-bearers—then came the hearse, and the coach containing the mourners. This was followed by a number of persons on foot, public members of the Cherry-street congregation; and lastly, and it was an affecting addition to

the procession, uninvited and unexpected, came a number of poor women in black, and closed the scene. He cherished the poor in his life, and was honored by them in his death. The corpse was placed in its mansion of the house appointed for all living, and the services of the occasion were well and solemnly conducted by the Rev. J. Entwistle and the Rev. J. Bicknell. The Chapel was crowdedly attended, but the utmost attention and order prevailed.

"On Tuesday evening last, a funeral sermon was preached to a very large audience, in the same Chapel, by the Rev. J. Bicknell. There was some slight commotion soon after the service commenced, but as it proceeded, the seriousness of the assembly deepened into solemnity and fixed attention. The text was St Luke, chap. ii. verse 29, 30, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ;" and the purport of the discourse was to exhibit the character, the experience, and the death of a believer. It was a masterly exposition of the passage, followed up by many solemn and touching appeals to the conscience.

"Some account of the Doctor was given at the close of the discourse, from which we gathered, that in the earlier part of his life he had been gay and trifling ; that by the advice of serious friends he had been convinced of the folly of

his pursuits, and that he might be the instrument of usefulness to others, had devoted himself to the work of the ministry. After serving an apprenticeship to a surgeon in Leeds, he had studied in London and Edinburgh ; had served in the capacity of hospital surgeon in the Swedish army ; and was, at the time when his views were effectually changed, a medical practitioner in the town of Nottingham. The change of his views was as permanent as it was deep. His sympathy with the distressed was exhibited not only in the readiness with which he relieved their necessity, but, as occasion required, in the willingness also with which he prescribed for the diseased, and visited the neglected and forgotten. The law of kindness was written on his lips ; his manners were frank, open, and unsuspicuous. His eagerness was not the impetuosity of anger, but the exuberance of kindly and affectionate feeling. His last illness was short of continuance ; it was one of great pain, but borne by the amiable sufferer with the utmost meekness. He was calm, collected, and resigned ; and as he drew nearer and nearer to the gates of death, the few words he was able to utter were those of confidence and of hope in the blood of Christ. *Euge et vale.*

" We may just add that the musical part of the service was conducted with great propriety. Though the service lasted for nearly three

hours, the congregation shewed no eagerness to depart, and many, before they did so, stole to the spot,

“Now sacred by his reliques made.”

Mr Bicknell has published the excellent sermon delivered by him on the occasion. The following address was that spoken by Mr Entwistle, to which allusion has already been made. I am aware that it must appear under considerable disadvantage, but it were a pity that it should be lost; and to the friends of the deceased, it must afford gratification in the perusal. The pauses and involuntary breaks—the melting tone—the deep, but subdued feeling of the speaker—his countenance mellowed with the first tints of the autumn of life—the tears of the mourners and the congregation—all these made the address something on the occasion which it cannot be upon paper. So general was the feeling, that even the crowds at the door stood aside, and opened an avenue as by one consent, that the mourners and others might pass unmolested by.

Mr Bicknell sung a hymn, and engaged in prayer. He then read the 90th Psalm, and the 15th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and then Mr Entwistle spoke as follows:—

“ My brethren, on this most solemn occasion,

my feelings are overwhelming. It is unnecessary that I should address you at length, as my worthy colleague will improve the mournful event, if God will, in a funeral sermon on Tuesday evening next. Nor would it be in my power to deliver a long address—my feelings would overcome me—never was an hour more solemn to me than the present. However, I will detain you a few moments.

“The circumstances of this day are calculated to produce mixed feelings. First, feelings of sorrow on account of our own loss. That we feel—my colleague and I feel it—we were like a three fold cord, one part of which is now separated from us. You amongst whom he ministered the word of life feel the loss you have sustained.

“Secondly, ours are feelings of sympathetic grief with the bereaved widow and children, and other relations of the deceased. We weep with them that weep—it is right so to do—we imitate our blessed Lord at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus wept. Though he knew that he was about to raise his friend Lazarus, and that thereby God would be glorified, yet when Jesus saw Mary ‘weeping and the Jews also weeping who came with her’ to the grave, *he wept also*. Never did Jesus *as man* appear greater than on that occasion; leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.

"On this occasion we cannot, we do not wish to suppress our feelings of sympathetic sorrow: yet we 'sorrow not as those who have no hope.'

No—

'Faith builds a bridge, twixt this world and the next,

'O'er death's dark gulph; and all its horrors hides.'

'If a man die shall he live again?' Yes, for those that sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him. On this occasion, the words of our Lord to Martha strongly impress my mind, and I would say to you, my Brother Taft,* as our Lord said to her—'Thy Brother shall rise again;' and you are ready to reply, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day.'

'This flesh shall slumber in the ground,

'Till the last trumpet's voice shall sound.'

For our Lord will change this vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

"We have lately had breach upon breach. Three of our brethren in the ministry in this neighbourhood have been called away in a few months,—Brother Banks, of Redditch, Brother Hulme, of Dudley, and now my late worthy colleague, Dr Taft.

* The Rev. Z. Taft was present on the occasion.

" Death comes very near to us—yet there is nothing terrible in it. I have seen so many christians raised above the love of life and the fear of death—that all idea of gloom and horror has long been banished from my mind. It is better in respect of the individual to depart and be with Christ.

" How uncertain is life! On Tuesday, January 27th, he preached—on Wednesday he found it necessary to decline preaching—early on Thursday morning he became seriously ill—next morning he appeared to be better, and said to me, ' I think this affliction will not be unto death : however, all is right with me, whether life or death.' About 10 minutes before 12 o'clock that night, he died in peace.

" This solemn event has a voice to this congregation. He had a great concern for the prosperity of religion, and in his conversations with me, often spoke of the awful sense he had of the moral condition of a large proportion of the inhabitants of this town. Let me recommend the practical improvement of this afflictive providence to you that are yet unconverted. May I not say in the language of the Apostle, in the lesson now read to you, ' Some of you have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame.' Am I uncharitable in making the observation? I would to God that I were mistaken.

" Hear a voice from *that tomb* calling you to repent, and turn to God. Some of you respected and honoured our deceased friend. Would you wish to give him joy and increase his happiness, let me remind you that our Lord says—‘ There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repented.’ There is some mode of communication between Earth and Heaven—for Angels and Saints could not rejoice in a fact of which they had no knowledge. Should the report now be made in Heaven, that a sinner is now repenting and turning to God—the happy spirit of our dear brother would rejoice.

" Should it please God to re-animate *that body*—should he again ascend *this pulpit*, and address you—no doubt you would be affected; perhaps some would be thrown into fits. But ‘ if you hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither would you believe, though one rose from the dead.’

" You, my brethren, who are members of the Christian society in which he laboured, are loudly called upon to holy diligence—to die to the world and live for eternity. Many of you will recollect that only a fortnight since yesterday, he preached his last sermon from this pulpit. His text was “ I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” He was unusually animated, especially when speaking of the displays of God’s glory above; and the congregation listened with interested attention. But, my brethren, had he

known that he was preaching his last sermon in this chapel, he would have been still more animated; and had we who heard him, known that we should hear his voice no more in this house, we should have heard with greater attention than we yielded—with deeper feeling than we entertained."

A few remarks may be expected here on the personal and ministerial character of Dr Taft.

The former of these may seem to be sufficiently illustrated in the foregoing pages—to offer a few additional observations is all that is intended in this place.

It has been stated that he was a man of faith and prayer, and that he enjoyed a large measure of sanctifying grace. It may be added, that he was very jealous for the Lord of Hosts, and could not bear that the standard of Christian experience should be lowered beneath the promise of the Gospel,—“I will, be thou clean,” and this he understood to mean not only the forgiveness of sin, but a cleansing from all unrighteousness. He constantly maintained that it was our privilege not only to be servants, but to be sons—not only to walk in the fear, but in the perfect love of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been observed that he was generous to the poor; he was so on principle. He regularly kept an account, that

he might know exactly what proportion of his income went to the Lord's poor and to the church. To his family he could deny nothing that promised them comfort, but such was his sense of duty, that he daily practised self-denial, that he might not lessen the fund devoted to the Lord. He felt as though the whole connection was, in a sense, his own family, and in an especial manner was ever ready to enter affectionately into all the concerns of his brethren in the ministry.

As a minister he had his excellencies and his defects. "The greatest praise," says Mr. Bicknell, "that can be given to any man who fills the sacred office of a minister of the gospel, is, that of uniformly aiming at *usefulness*, and diligently employing himself to secure it; this praise justly belongs to Dr Taft; he laboured to bring souls to Christ." His desire to be useful, was an uniform and constant principle of action; and his conviction was, that to preach Christ and him crucified, at all times, and in every place, was the only way to win souls to God. But he was diligent as well as zealous—the labour with which he prepared himself for the pulpit, was far greater than what any but his intimate friends suspected it to have been. He was unwearied in consulting authorities, and in comparing conflicting opinions. In fact, in the opinion of his best friends, the success

of his compositions as such, would have been greater than it was, had he trusted more to the labour of his own mind, and been possessed of greater confidence in himself than was the case. That he might keep back *nothing which was profitable*, he studied variety in his preparations for the pulpit, and while he avoided matters of mere criticism, and of a curious, rather than useful description—he left no duty unenforced, no doctrine unexplained, no christian attainment unrecommended.

His appearance in the pulpit was that of a man who had lost sight of himself in the subject. Outward adorning was a matter of little concern to him—not from affectation or love of singularity, but from a better motive,—perhaps Cowper described the cause of his indifference to such matters ;

.....“ a heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel, as beneath her care.”

His voice was deep, but not very powerful, nor of large compass, but what it wanted in volume it possessed in richness and cadence. In his happier occasions, when he was not exhausted by previous exertion, and was led forth by his ardent zeal to bring glory to his Redeemer, his voice happily seconded his wishes, and embodied the feelings of his inmost soul. Of his sermons it might truly be said—out of the

abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. He was what is called an awakening preacher—a son of thunder—but he was far from being destitute of the qualifications of a teacher in righteousness and a son of consolation, to those who had been awakened and brought to God. Many of his discourses are left by him written at length, but from one of them it would be difficult to form a correct idea of his talents as a preacher. Nor is this at all a matter of wonder. They were written for the pulpit and not for the press.* “ So distinct in its very nature is oral from written eloquence, that the qualifications and the rules for succeeding in the one, would be of extremely little service towards enabling a man to attain excellence in the other. Whether effect or instruction be the object aimed at, the composition requires in the respective cases, to be of a perfectly different texture; so much so, that we doubt whether a person unaccustomed to speak in public, would be able to compose a speech which should, even if well delivered, realize the effect upon which he had calculated. The remark, indeed, partakes of triteness, so palpable is the fact, that speeches and discourses which electrified the audience, read in some cases comparatively tame, in others turgid, and that many indivi-

* Eclectic Review, Vol. 12. (Dec. 1819) p. 504, &c.

duals who seldom speak without effect, never undertake to write without occasioning disappointment. With regard, therefore, to the merit of a preacher's sermons, on the score of eloquence, we think they are brought in the closet to a very uncertain test. They ought to suffer nothing from perusal in regard to the strength of argument, the soundness of doctrine, the essential value of the sentiments which they contain; but their adaptation to that full and powerful expression, which the preacher seeks to produce upon an audience, can be but very imperfectly judged of by the effect they have upon the reader. Now, it appears to us, that a characteristic excellence of a sermon, is its appropriateness, as a composition, to the circumstances of public delivery; and those are the best sermons, their doctrinal accuracy being equal, which most powerfully affect the hearer." "In the actual personal contact in which the preacher stands with his audience, it is not by intellectual might, by the mere weight of his arm, but by the rapid succession of his strokes, by the reiteration of faint impressions, that he effects his purpose. The hearer has no time to pause upon what he has failed to apprehend at the first enunciation, or to retrace the ground over which he has been led. A sentence, the meaning of which he does not anticipate before half pronounced, is dis-

closed to him too late when the beginning is half forgotten. An argument which is not conducted with the obviousness and directness of demonstration, or with the graphical distinctness of familiar analogy, is but ill adapted to the grasp of an audience." "One thing cannot be represented on the canvass, and that is motion. In the published discourse, there is at least wanting the indescribable animation which, breathed into every word and gesture, constitutes the vital principle of eloquence. Written composition is adapted more permanently to influence our convictions and our sentiments, but the strong present emotion produced by the living oratory of the voice, arises from our sympathy with the real or apparent feelings which its tones express, quite as much as from either the correctness of the composition, or the weight of the argument. And it is well that it is so; it is well that the heart, the seat of devotion and the root of character, should be also the source of true oratory, and that it should be requisite for a man to seem himself to feel, in order powerfully to excite the feelings of others."

Having premised these remarks, which may assist the reader to form an enlightened judgment in the case, the following discourse is submitted as a favorable specimen of the author's talents and piety. His friends will perceive

with pleasure, that some of his familiar phrases are here put upon the record; and they will know how to associate in their minds, his energetic language with the memory of the warm and impassioned delivery for which he was distinguished.

From these materials, the memoirs and the discourse, the reader will find no difficulty in forming a judgment of the life and character of the Rev. Henry Taft.

... thy command did to smoothe all my way; though
I went barefoot; brought out many a tearful sigh,
and did afflictions in passing over land and water.
PSALM LIX. 9. *The zeal of thy house hath eaten
me up.*

Zeal is a warm emotion or affection of the mind, in the pursuit of some object of great importance, in the estimation of the person under its influence. It is good or evil according to the object towards which it is directed, and the manner in which it is regulated. Some are zealous in the cause of superstition, infidelity, impiety and vice. Satan like, they are not content with their own destruction; but are determined, if possible, to destroy both the church and the world. Paul said of himself before his conversion, "concerning zeal, persecuting the church." Nothing has been more afflicting to the church of God, than a misguided superstitious zeal. It was this that caused the Jews to persecute and martyr the primitive Christians, and the Papists to embrue their hands in the blood of millions of innocent Protestants. Many have been as zealous in the cause of infidelity, as others have been in that of superstition. The well-known anti-christian conspiracy with which the continent was cursed in the days of the impious Voltaire, is not the only proof of this. There has been a somewhat similar con-

spiracy in our own day, and, alas, in our own country. The press has been the mighty engine made use of, to diffuse, with the greatest rapidity, the hellish poison. Cheap publications, in which infidel principles have been dressed up to suit the vitiated taste of those among the lower orders who were discontented and given to change, have been dispersed in every direction with a zeal which would have become a better cause. Every mite of talent and influence that infidelity could command, has been pressed into its service. Every thing that the most malicious ingenuity and unblushing impudence could effect, has been done. These emissaries of hell have compassed sea and land that they might rob us of every thing we hold most dear,—our Bible, our immortal hope, and our God! And although the rock of christianity could never be moved by the waves which infidelity dashed against it, those who have not been properly established upon it have too often been washed away. There are not a few who neither advocate the cause of superstition, nor that of infidelity, who are zealous in the cause of impiety and vice! There is no sin, however degrading to their character, insulting to God, or injurious to society, that they are not committing with all their might. Nor are they satisfied to go to hell alone. Some of them are doing every thing they can to seduce un-

suspecting innocence ; others are putting the bottle to their neighbour's mouth, or laying stumbling blocks in the way of the people of God, determined neither to enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer those that would, to enter in. Some time since I recollect reading an account of a demon-like infernal zeal that would have done credit to the devil himself. Two Italians had quarrelled, and such was the revengeful spirit with which one of them was animated in consequence, that as soon as a favourable opportunity offered, he seized the other, threw him upon the ground, drew his stiletto, and declared that unless he would immediately blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ, he would plunge it into his breast. The poor miserable wretch had no sooner cursed his Lord that bought him, than he stabbed him to the heart, exulting that he was effectually and eternally revenged upon his enemy ! Let all who feel shocked at such an instance of satanic zeal, recollect that while either by their positive example, or their negative indolence and indifference, they give their sanction to the cause of superstition, infidelity, impiety or vice, they are animated by a zeal which is similar in its nature, though it may be inferior in degree. Some are very zealous for things that in themselves are indifferent, while they are unconcerned for those of the first importance. The Jews

were zealous for the traditions of their fathers; but they neglected the law of their God; they were scrupulously exact in paying tythe of mint, anise and cummin; but they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and truth. And in our day there are many who are perversely zealous for things that are equally indifferent, while they are cold and unconcerned about the great things which involve the salvation of man.

Light and darkness are not more opposed to each other than Christian zeal is to that we have been describing. It is *pure* in its nature. However ardent in the prosecution of its object, it will never seek a right end by wrong means; on no account, do evil that good may come. It is right that we should be zealous against erroneous sentiments, and doctrinal corruptions; but we cannot serve the cause of error more effectually than by contending for the truth, like Jehu, in an improper spirit. Truth can be defended only by clear reasoning and sound argument; not by abusive words and a vindictive spirit. Some persons are very zealous against sin in others, while they indulge in the commission of sin themselves. It is right that we should be zealous against sin, but we should take care that our own sins rather than the sins of others—and our own duties, rather than the duties of others, should be the first ob-

jects of our regard, or we may expect that cutting reflection, “*Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*” Christian zeal is *fervent love*; a *high degree* of the love of God and man; a *flame of holy, benevolent love*, which many wasters cannot quench. Every thing, therefore, which is inconsistent with christian love, is equally inconsistent with christian zeal. It has not only an object which reason approves and revelation enjoins, but in the pursuit of this object, it is *wise and well regulated*. Some appear to think that zeal is inconsistent with prudence—if they mean that *worldly* prudence which would freeze its energies for fear of offending worldly men, they are correct; but if they mean that christian prudence which will restrain the excesses of our fervour without weakening its energies, they are mistaken. Christian zeal is not such an ideot as to neglect to provide for its own success; and would that success be provided for, without employing for its accomplishment, every precaution which christian prudence can suggest? This zeal, therefore, will be as discreet as it is fervent, well knowing that its warmest efforts will be neither effectual nor lasting without those provisions which discretion alone can make. While its fervor will burst the fetters of timidity, where duty requires a holy boldness; and when we are called upon to lose all lesser fear in the fear

of God ; its prudence will teach us when to deliberate and when to be active ; when to speak and when to be silent ; when to give and when to withhold. The sun of our beneficence, like that of our heavenly Father, must arise upon all men. But we must not only be as discriminating as we are liberal ; we must also be just before we are generous. We must never give to others, nor to any benevolent institution, what does not belong to us.

Christian zeal is as energetic as it is prudent. What difficulties has not the zeal of the politician and of the soldier encountered ; what dangers has it not dared ! And is not the love of God and of man, when possessed in a high degree, a stronger as well as a nobler passion than the love of honor or of affluence ? Animated by this heroic passion, St Paul could say to bonds and imprisonments—to dangers and deaths in their most shocking form ; “ *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.*” Feeble, slothful, and cowardly as we are while destitute of this zeal, we are no sooner animated by it than we labour with pleasure, and suffer with patience, and even with joy, in its service. A zealous christian will welcome labour, fatigue, difficulties and danger ; farewell that ease and indolence, that pleasure

or pursuit, which is inconsistent with this main design. Labour is delight, difficulty inviting, and danger illustrious and alluring in this glorious enterprise. “*The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.*” Our attention is called

- I. *To the object of that zeal with which a servant of God should always be influenced.*
- II. *The effect of this zeal.*

I. *The object of that zeal with which we ought always to be animated.*

Although personal religion is not mentioned in the text as the object our zeal exerts itself in promoting, it certainly is implied. Never can you feel for the salvation of your dearest relatives, your immediate offspring, as you ought, much less for the salvation of the church of God, till you have felt as you ought for your own salvation. And if you could feel ever so exquisitely for them, till you have realized the salvation of God yourselves, you have no ability to assist in promoting their salvation. What ability has a drunkard to teach sobriety; a prostitute to teach chastity; or a madman to teach wisdom! Never dream of making others wise in what as immortal accountable creatures it most imports them to know, while destitute of that wisdom yourselves. While either by your positive example, or your negative indolence and indifference you give your sanction to the cause

of superstition, infidelity, impiety, or vice; yours is a horrid ability of promoting the damnation of others only, and not their salvation.

Personal religion therefore is the object that christian zeal exerts itself in promoting in the first place.

When compared with this, all other objects, however excellent in themselves, must dwindle into insignificance. In the sight of this they must all vanish as the twinkling stars of night, when the glorious star of day purples the eastern clouds. Compared with *my own*, the salvation of the universe is to me of no moment. What would it benefit me, were my wife and children, my friends and relatives, my neighbours and acquaintances, enthroned in glory to all eternity, if I was hurled into the abysses of eternal darkness and despair? Self-preservation is the first law of our nature; every other consideration therefore is inferior, and must always give way to this. Our own salvation was our first object when we became serious; and it will be while we continue so. Our present, our uttermost, and our eternal salvation was that object. Our first, our prevailing concern should always be, that we may be saved to the uttermost and to the end *ourselves*. Not only that we may live in the experience of *every* christian grace, but that we may enjoy *the greatest possible maturity* of every grace. Zeal never enquires, how little religion

will bring us to heaven, but how much it is our privilege to enjoy. And in the pursuit of this uttermost salvation, it considers nothing done while any thing remains undone. "Not as though I had already attained," is the language of this zeal, "either were already perfect; but I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended," &c. But although christian zeal, like christian charity, always begins at home, neither the one nor the other will end there.

2. *The salvation of God's house or church, will always be the object of the zealous Christian's pursuit.* The stability, purity, unity, and increase of the church of Christ are implied therein.

(1) *The stability of the church.* There is nothing more hateful in the sight of God—nothing more distressing to the zealous christian, than the instability of professing christians. Alas! how much it is to be regretted that some men are so easily blown about with every wind of false doctrine, as to abandon every dictate of reason and common sense, as well as every doctrine of revelation, for the vagaries, whimsies, and pregnant throes of a Johanna Southcot, or the maniacal ravings of a Brothers! Is it not enough to make our eyes weep, and our hearts bleed, that one day professors should be on the mount, and the next in the valley. That in the morning they should be ready with

Peter to suffer and die with their Lord ; and in the evening be denying him with oaths and curses ? There is nothing so injurious to religion, so disgraceful to your character, so calculated to prevent your improvement, so offensive to God, as your instability. Get your hearts established in the belief of the truth ; and you will no longer be so wavering either in your experience or practice. And for this purpose acquaint yourselves with the doctrines of christianity, and with the evidences of their truth and vast importance. Seek those *genuine* graces of the spirit, which these doctrines require : and an *increasing maturity* of these graces, and you will be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved. Seek for an *habitual* as well as an *unreserved* devotion of yourselves to the service of your God. Let excellence be your motto—Let the conduct of the faithful be your pattern ! Get established on the Rock of Ages, and it will not be the waves that infidelity, impiety, and vice can dash against it that will ever move you. Give all diligence that you may add to your faith, virtue, to your virtue, knowledge, &c. for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(2) *The purity of the church is an object of the christian's zeal.* If we are concerned for the stability, we shall be equally concerned for the

purity of the church. Some have thought that because our Lord said the tares and the wheat in the field must grow together until the harvest, that the wicked therefore should not be expelled from communion with the christian church. But the field there means the world, and not the church. The Apostle exhorts one of the churches to reprove its unfaithful members : but if they were not thereby reclaimed, they were to be to them as heathens and publicans with whom they had no connection. Never can we consent to be defiled by the wicked continuing in church fellowship with us, however powerful or affluent. Highly as our Lord commends the angels of the churches in Pergamus and Thyatira, He had somewhat against them, because the one had some members who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel ; and the other suffered that woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce his servants. One immoral person—one covetous wretch *in* the church, will do more harm than numbers can do *without*. One Achan brought the curse of God upon the ancient Israelites, nor could that curse be remoyed without his destruction. And how often have these Achans caused Ichabod to be written upon the church in the present day ! O ye Peters who have denied, and ye

Judases who have betrayed your Lord ! what curses have you been to the christian church ! If you are determined still to deny and betray your Lord, we intreat you to leave us, lest your spirit should become infectious, and you should involve others in the perdition which awaits you ! If any member of a christian society is unhappily overtaken with a fault, if he is penitent, those who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of meekness. But if any one continues to live in sin after being borne with for a time, and repeatedly admonished ; however painful it may be to us, such an one must be to us as a heathen and a publican. Perhaps there are no characters more capable of injuring the church of God, than backsliders in heart. These thorny ground hearers have not only choked the good seeds which have been sown, vegetating and springing up in their own hearts, but in others also. They no sooner lose the mind that was in Christ, than they generally become more waspish and demon-like in spirit than before their conversion to God. But however captious, irritable, vindictive and domineering they may be in their tempers and dispositions ; while they retain the form of religion, we cannot exclude them from our society, though some of them only remain with us like wasps to sting, like serpents to bite, and like madmen to scatter firebrands, arrows and

death. O that all who have apostatized from Christ, whether in heart or life, would immediately look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn with a godly sorrow that never needeth to be repented of.

(3) *The zealous christian will be concerned also to promote the unity of the church.* There is not a greater diversity, it is highly probable, in the organization of our bodies, than in our mental capacities. There is also a great difference in the degrees with which our minds are cultivated. It is not possible therefore that, in every little thing we should be exactly united in sentiment. But we should always be united in *design*, in *affection*, and in *effort*. The design of every member should be the same as that of the whole church, the glory of God, in the salvation of every soul of man, and of course in his own salvation. And according to his ability he should labour to promote that design. But we should especially be united to each other by *the ties of affection*. Could we speak in the cause of religion with all the charming eloquence of a Grecian Demosthenes or a Roman Tully; yea, with all the sublimity of an Angel, if we do not *love one another* we are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals in the estimation of the Divine Being, i. e. noisy instruments of no value. Every christian should embrace in the arms of his

compassion the whole human family, yea, his very enemies. To these he should return good for evil, and blessing for cursing. The sun of his beneficence, like that of his heavenly Father, should arise upon all men. But for the household of faith he should feel a *peculiar* affection. These are the children of his heavenly Father ; for these, therefore, he should feel a *brotherly affection*. Let us not love each other in word or tongue only, but in deed and in truth, with an affection which will make us do what we can to promote each others' temporal as well as spiritual interest. In many things we cannot think alike, but let us take care that we love alike. It was said of the primitive followers of our Lord, "*See how these christians love one another.*" And if we have as much of the spirit of our Lord as they had, the same will be said of us. When in consequence of his age and infirmities, St John could do little more, he caused himself to be brought into the assemblies of the saints, that he might say unto them, "*Little children love one another!*" If we are thus united in *design* and *affection*, we shall also be *united in effort*. We shall combine our energies and unite our influence in bringing down the kingdom of satan, and in erecting that of Christ on its ruins. In this glorious cause, leaders and members, preachers and people, must be united in effort. It is not enough that

the officers in Emmanuel's army are going forth to engage the enemy, the army must be with them; every man at his post. When Lord Nelson was going into battle, he hoisted a signal, that "England expects every man to do his duty." I would hoist a somewhat similar signal this day: that in this glorious warfare God and his church expect every man to do his duty. Christianity may be compared to a mighty battering ram, with which we must beat down the strong holds of sin and satan. But it is only by the combination of our energies and the union of our influence that we can bring this mighty engine to bear upon those strong holds. If *every one* is *at it*, and we are *always at it*, our success will be certain! What is there then that a zealous christian would not do to promote this union of design, of affection, and of effort in the christian church? The discontented, and those who are given to change, are often exerting themselves to divide, satan like, that they may devour. Shall not we be as zealous to unite, as these emissaries of hell are to divide? May leaders and members, preachers and people, cleave closer and closer to each other and to Christ. Union is strength. The wolf of hell can never devour, unless he first divide.

"Together let us sweetly live,
Together let us die!
And each a starry crown receive
And reign above the sky."

(4) *The increase of the church is also the object which we should be zealous to promote.* No zealous christian can be reconciled to the usurper tyrannizing over any of the lawful subjects of the Messiah ; much less that he should remain in the undisturbed possession of by far the greater part of them. The warfare in which the church of God has been engaged has too often been of a mere defensive nature. We have been attacked by superstition and infidelity, by vice and prejudice ; and we have contented ourselves with repelling the attacks of our assailants. But it is high time that we should rise from our slumbering inactivity, and carry on this holy warfare into the heart of the enemies' country. The extension of the kingdom of our Lord must be near our hearts, or we can have no just pretence to the christian name. Small as was its beginning, and slow as hath been its progress hitherto, ere long, this kingdom shall be an universal one. The grain of mustard seed shall grow and shoot forth great branches. The little stone cut out without hands, shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. The irreversible decree is gone forth, and its execution is infallibly certain. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. The zealous christian will exert himself in every possible way to hasten the ap-

proaching triumph of his glorious redeemer, and hail him the universal monarch. He will ardently desire, fervently pray for, and diligently exert himself to hasten the long wished for millenial reign of his Lord—gladly contribute his mite of talent, of influence, and of property to the support of bible, missionary, Sunday school, benevolent, tract, and all other societies and institutions of a similar nature. Christian zeal will never complain that we have too many institutions of this kind to support, though it may often regret its inability to support them as it could wish. (It would rather live in the exercise of the most rigid œconomy, and unwearied diligence, than not enjoy the luxury of contributing to the support of institutions so truly excellent.) At the same time that the zealous christian will exert himself to promote the increase of the universal church, he will more especially labour to increase that particular church to which he is more intimately united. If I know my own heart, I wish well to all the denominations of christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ; and rejoice in their prosperity. But I am free to acknowledge that I love the methodist church the best ; because I owe my hope of a blissful immortality to it ; and because I believe under God it is the most calculated to benefit the world. Such is our œconomy, that we can bring into active service all the diversity of

talent we possess. There is not an individual among us but what we can employ either as a preacher, exhorter, leader, Sunday school teacher, visitor of the benevolent society, collector for the missions, prayer leader, promoter of the tract, dorciasian or some other benevolent institution among us ! What a glorious, extensive, and diversified mechanism are we employing at home and abroad to evangelize the universe. How numerous its wheels, and yet each is in perfect harmony with every other ; and every one in some degree dependent on the other ! What has God wrought already through its influence ! What may we not hope that he will hereafter do by it ! Is it not a high honor to contribute our mite of talent, of influence, and of property, towards adding first one and then another wheel to the glorious machine ? In such a cause as this, glow our zeal, kindle our affections, be exerted all our powers ! If this be enthusiasm, I hope to be a greater enthusiast than I ever have been ! If this be madness, I would be yet more beside myself ! Methodists, let us do every thing in our families that a pious example, religious instruction, the proper exercise of our parental authority, and unceasing prayer, will enable us, to promote the increase of methodism ! Let us do every thing in our neighbourhood and in the world for this purpose, that piety and benevolence, that zeal and love will enable us. Which

of us can say he has done all he ought to have done, all he could have done, and all that in the judgement he will wish he had done? May our exertions in future make some atonement for our past defects!

II. *The effects of this zeal.*

Before I call your attention to the effect mentioned in the text; I may be allowed to remark,

1. *It is always acceptable to God.*

There is nothing so hateful in the sight of God as that indifference and indecision of character, in a professor of religion, which evinces a total want of this zeal. "I would thou wert either cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." There is nothing so pleasing to the Divine Being as this pure, wise, well regulated and energetic zeal. What is the distinctive characteristic of Noah, the *preacher of righteousness*, of Abraham, of Moses, of Samuel, of Elijah, of Daniel, of Shadrach, of Meshach, of Abednego, of other eminent servants of the Most High, honoured in the sacred records by special tokens of his approbation? *Zeal for the Lord*; zeal evidencing itself by faith, by obedience, by holy fortitude, by strenuous exertions for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow men. It is the most ennobling, purifying, and benevolent principle by which the soul of

man can be animated. Never are we so angelic, so seraphic—so Christ like—so hated by the devil—so pleasing to God, as when the zeal of the Lord's house eats us up.

2. It is always useful.

It was the zeal of the Apostles that triumphed over the people's prejudice, the priest's cunning, the legislator's mandate, the conqueror's power, and the persecutor's sword, and in spite of them all, evangelized the then known world ! And what is it owing to under God, but their zeal, that christian ministers have been made such a blessing to this nation within the last 70 or 80 years ? Hundreds of thousands of our countrymen now before the throne of God ; and hundreds of thousands still in the church militant, have been the fruit of their labours. Is it not to christian zeal that we are indebted for those excellent institutions which reflect such lustre on the present age ? The Bible, Sunday School, Tract, Benevolent and Missionary Societies ? A zealous christian is always useful wherever his example is known and his influence felt ; but especially in his family and immediate neighbourhood. Our usefulness in the church is in general in proportion to our zeal. How often have zealous christians and ministers of inferior talents, been made a greater blessing than those whose talents were superior, but whose zeal was less ? Our zeal will generally be useful to *others*, but it will *always* be so

to ourselves. There is an inseparable connection between the experience of christian graces and the practice of christian duty. The more zealously we exert ourselves in the cause of our God, the more assured will be our faith and hope! Whenever did we live in the exercise of a pure, wise, well regulated zeal without enjoying a present reward? God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labour of love. If Israel is not gathered you shall not lose your reward. You will not only have your hundred fold reward in this life, either in temporals or spirituals, but in the judgement you will have the Divine plaudit; when the selfish worldling, and the Laodicean professor, shall meet with mortification, rebuke, and rejection! Our attention is called

3. To the effect produced upon the individual who has a high degree of this zeal. For it is not every degree of christian zeal which will produce the effect mentioned in the text. If a christian is an eminently zealous one, his zeal will consume him. The zeal of the bigot consumes others, but the zeal of the christian consumes himself.

(1.) It consumes his reputation.

No sooner is this holy benevolent flame, which many waters cannot quench, kindled in our breast, than we are considered by those who thought highly of us, and delighted to associate with us while destitute of it, as men of weak if not deranged intellects. And they not only

sneer at us as fanatics, fools and enthusiasts; but avoid us as carefully as they would the pestilence. Nor is the zealous christian thought much better of by the Laodicean formalists and the blackslider in heart, than by the selfish worldling, or the notoriously wicked. He is generally considered by these characters as a forward, self-opinionated, head-strong professor, who is destitute of common prudence, and therefore much more calculated to do harm than good. We lament that there have been forward, self-opinionated, head-strong, imprudent professors in the church, who certainly have done more harm than good. And we acknowledge that there are some excellent characters in the church, who are naturally of a fervid mind, who have not learned all at once how to restrain the excesses of their fervor; but a little experience will teach them. It would be highly improper hastily to restrain, and thereby weaken, if not destroy, the energy of their zeal, rather than give them a little time to learn that experience which will restrain its excesses without weakening its energies! In the present day, professors are in much greater danger of lukewarmness than of being imprudently zealous. But however pure, wise, and well regulated is the christian zeal, if it is energetic, it is in general spoken of in the most contemptuous manner by the formal and lukewarm. He has fervor enough, but preci-

ous little discretion! He suffers the warmth of his first love to run away with his prudence. It is to be hoped he will cool by and by. We were once as hot and imprudent ourselves; but we have learned a little discretion at length! These characters acknowledge then that they have lost their first love. Unless they get that extinguished flame rekindled in their breast, it had been better for them had they never been born. Instead of throwing cold water on that flame of holy benevolent love which glows in the breasts of others, they ought to pray to God day and night, that he would rekindle this extinguished fire in their own hearts. The mandate of God to them is that they repent and do their first works.

(2.) *It consumes his bodily strength.*

In exerting himself in every possible way to reclaim the wicked, the ignorant, the wretched and the abandoned, the zealous christian often goes beyond his strength. And at the same time that they thus spend their strength in the cause of piety and benevolence, they exhaust their spirits. Wearied, however, as the zealous christian often is in the service of his God, he is never weary of it. To spend and be spent in it, is his delight. He not only fatigues his body and exhausts his spirits, but risks his life, and sometimes obtains the crown of martyrdom by bringing from the beds of the sick and the dying those diseases which terminate his life.

(3.) It consumes his property.

A pure, wise, and well regulated zeal will not neglect to provide for those of our own household, and thereby make us worse than infidels. It will not fail to regulate our charity by christian discrimination, and provide for it by christian frugality and christian diligence. Nevertheless it *will not, cannot* see the cause of God starve while it has any ability to contribute to its support. Zeal does not love either God's cause, or his poor, in word or in tongue only, but in deed and in truth! If our zeal is pure, the more ardent it is, the more benevolent shall we be.

4. But although the christian may be eaten up by his zeal, he will not thereby be lost or destroyed!

(1.) *His reputation is not lost.* It is with God, and he will one day most assuredly vindicate it. And in the mean time, while principles are imputed to us we never felt, and practices we never committed; while our conversation is misunderstood and our conduct is misrepresented, “This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity; not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.” The testimony of conscience will bear us up under all the attacks of back wounding calumny, till the Lord himself shall vindicate our injured character, whether that vindication shall be in this world, or not till the judgement.

(2.) *His strength is not lost.* For the Lord will re-wind up all the springs of his mind, and continually refresh him with his grace. As his outward man fails therefore his inward man is renewed day by day.

(3.) *His property is not lost,* but safely laid up in the bank of heaven.

APPLICATION.

Are you in pursuit at least, if not in possession of this pure, wise, and well regulated energetic zeal? (1.) Are you determined by the grace of God to seek the destruction of your own sin! your easily besetting sin—your every sin! that you will never rest till you are delivered from all inward as well as outward sin—from every bad temper as well as every bad action? Are you equally determined to seek the enjoyment of every gospel privilege; the being sanctified wholly as well as justified freely; the being filled with every grace of the Spirit, as well as emptied of every sin. And lastly, are you determined to do whatever you possibly can to promote the stability, the purity, the unity, and the increase of the church of Christ? May this zeal of the Lord's house eat you up.

FINIS.

